

FALSE COLORS", A New Serial by Edwina Levin

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

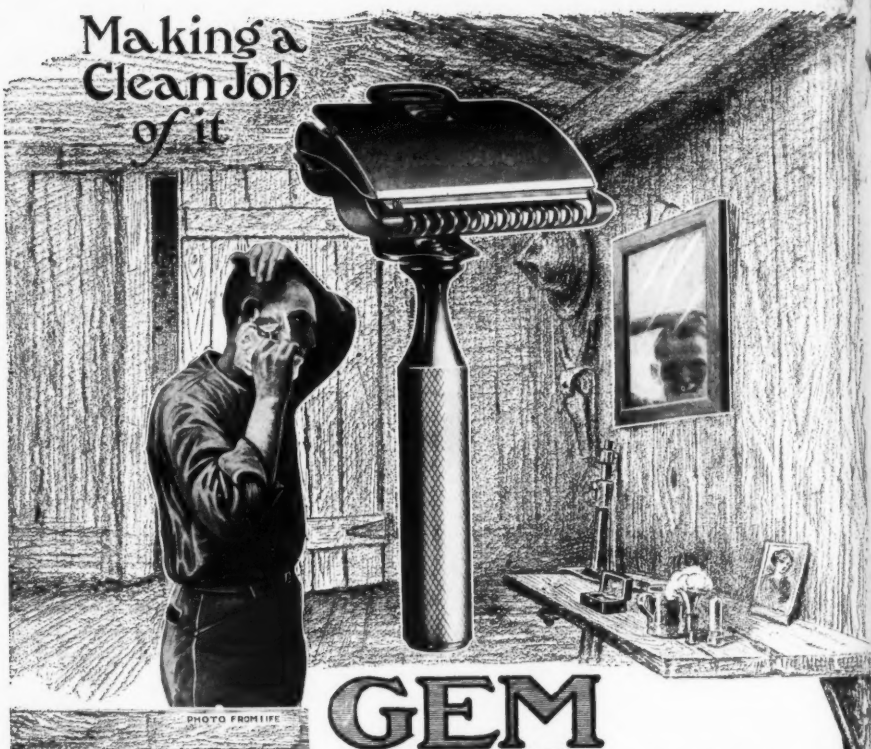
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Vol. XXIX

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 2

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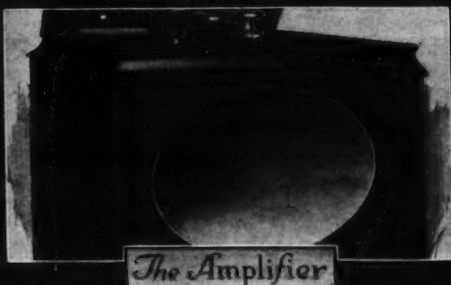
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 29

MAY, 1919

Number 2

False Colors

By Edwina Levin

Author of "He Never Lied to His Wife," "Happiness à la Mode," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

A vivid story of theatrical life in New York, told by a girl who knows—a girl who has been an actress herself. This big story will run through four numbers of SMITH'S.

CHAPTER I.

PARTS all filled!"

Closing a door marked "Private," a haughty office girl came and stood behind a little railing that separated her from the herd of anxious folk who tried to cover their disappointment with chatty bravado. The men in tight trousers and straw hats pushed jauntily back on their heads, or in long coats and soft hats pulled low over pallid, mournful faces, stopped for a pleasant word with the girl, whom they all addressed as "Fan." The women in short skirts and long earrings, or loose dresses and tight shoes—young women with old faces, and old women with young faces, which is one of the mysteries of the stage—all smiled at her. All were anxious to let her see that the little matter of "parts filled" really made not the slightest difference to them. It was entirely too warm to work, but "one must make the rounds, don't you know?"

They were there, a good hundred of them, jamming, pushing one another about in the hot, stuffy room, to see about parts in a play of seven charac-

1 S

ters, each hoping that he might be one of the lucky seven. But no hint of the tragic truth must escape them. A needy actor is an unneeded one.

There was, however, one girl in that sweltering room who had no smile for the haughty Fan; whose tall, slim figure drooped, while her small head seemed bent under the heavy bands of her pale-gold hair. In the big, somber eyes of Pauline Stevens was none of the cheerful bravado that marked the crowd. Those passionate, heavy-lidded eyes, as well as her creamy skin, had been inherited from a Spanish mother. Her brows and lashes, black by contrast with her hair, redeemed her from colorlessness, even when her eyes were veiled.

Hot, hungry, and worn out, she turned away. New York had beaten her as it had beaten so many others before her, would beat so many after her. She would try to get a road job. But even these were not to be had for the asking. Why had she not decided on this two or three weeks ago, before her money was gone?

She went out into the scorching street

and stood pondering. Fewer shows were going on tour on account of the war. But she must get something—anything, and at once!

'Bed and Bedlam.' I'd like to talk with you. Come up to my office."

Pauline's heart almost stopped. Had her big chance come at last, when she was just ready to quit?

She went up with him and found that, while he had no part open in any of his productions, he might introduce and recommend her to a friend who was making a new production. What had she done? It didn't really matter. She was very pretty. He was sure she could act; but to appear well to the other producer, she must let him help her to some pretty new clothes. She was lovely, but she needed something



"Parts all filled!" Closing a door marked "Private," a haughty office girl came and stood behind a little railing.

A man on the curb watched her with open admiration. He had noted the slim, rounded ankles beneath the short skirt, and the soft curves of her slender form, before she looked, with deep, tragic eyes, into his face. Smilingly he lifted his hat, and came over to her.

"I am Walter Wolsey, producer of

more striking to set her off. It was all very subtly put—with smiles and much flattery. He seemed fairly to harp on the utter impossibility of her getting attention in modest raiment.

"In this business, you must first attract; then you must make good," he said. And there was a sinister light in

False Colors

his eyes. "You have the beauty, but we rarely look at faces. We see too many. The ensemble—the general effect—is what we get first; then the face. I dare say, striking as you are, you haven't been looked at. You don't dress right. I'll send you to Madam Perot. She'll know exactly what will make you dazzling."

He said nothing that Pauline could actually resent, yet she understood him thoroughly. She stood up with flaming face.

"You are kind, but——"

"Go around a bit," he said. "Then come back and see me."

Pauline went out with a feeling of suffocation. How well he knew what the "going around a bit" would mean!

Clothes! Everybody harped on them!



But there was one girl in that sweltering room who had no smile for the haughty Fan.

The odor of frying bacon greeted her as she entered the little cool hall of the rooming house where she lived. A girl in kimono and slippers turned to her from the telephone just under the stairway. On the shelf of a coat and umbrella stand lay a theatrical magazine. From its cover flared a highly colored picture of Laura Figlan, a well-known Norwegian actress who had had a very popular season in America some five years before. Pauline stopped to look at it.

"Take it," said the girl at the phone hospitably. "I'm through with it. You look something like her. I've just heard that she's thrown Gossman down flat."

Picking up the magazine with a nod of thanks, Pauline went upstairs. It was not the first time she had been told that she looked like the beautiful Norwegian, who, through some strain of darker blood perhaps, gazed out at an admiring world from under pale-gold hair, with tragic black eyes. When first she had been told this, Pauline had gone to the theater to see the actress, then playing on tour, and had been astonished herself at the resemblance. She had seen it instantly, and people coming out of the theater had stared curiously at her.

"Must be her sister," one woman had whispered.

How Pauline had built on that resemblance, hoped on it! Surely it would mean big things to her when she got to New York. Figlan might want an understudy, or there might be a Figlan part and no one to play it. She would be ready. Who could tell?

She had made a special effort to save that winter, because the star was to play a return engagement on Broadway before sailing for England. That was Pauline's first season in the business, and she had taken the first thing that had offered; but there had been three wonderful weeks of New York by day

and the glorious Figlan by night. She had never missed a performance, but always sat in the gallery. And before the mirror in her tiny room, she had practiced all the little arts and graces of the famous actress, all her tricks and mannerisms, even her tones and the pretty lilting speech that was so precise, as is the way with those who speak a foreign tongue.

But after a while the truth came to her—if there was a Figlan part, Figlan would be brought over to play it, and understudies went on year after year as understudies. So she had given up her imitations, keeping only such tricks as were useful to her for scoring points, unusual bits of "business" that always "got over."

And now the great Figlan was returning to America. She was to open in a new play the following week—that is, new to Broadway, though she had had a long run in the piece in London. The papers were full of her. The firm of Gossman was featuring her return with unusual advertising.

The fumes of frying bacon grew stronger as Pauline reached the third landing. The landlady was knocking on the door next to hers. There was a sound of scurrying behind that door, then a pause. The landlady was raising her hand to knock again when she saw Pauline and turned on her.

"Miss Stevens, I'll need your room next week." Her high, rasping tones were upheld by a square jaw and a hard mouth.

"All right, Mrs. Andrews," Pauline answered in a choking voice. "I——"

"And you'll have to leave your trunks until you pay me them two weeks' back rent," the other cut in sharply.

"Mrs. Andrews, you know I can't even take a road engagement without my wardrobe," Pauline began.

"I don't know anything about that," snapped Mrs. Andrews. "All I know is that I've got to have some security

for my money, and I want the room Saturday night! What with people not paying me, and breaking up things, and using up gas, and smelling up my house with food, my life is a perfect hell!"

Pauline stumbled into her room, while Mrs. Andrews again turned back to her neighbors.

Saturday night! And this was Tuesday! The woman could not hold her trunks, as they contained the tools of her trade, but she had no money with which to move them, and not a cent to pay the first week's rent, which would be required in advance in any other boarding house. She threw herself across the bed. Beaten! Utterly beaten! A dry sob rose in her throat, and she sat up straight, clenching her hands.

"I won't cry! I won't!" she said fiercely. "Other girls have faced this! I can!" Then, curiously, like an unwelcome vagrant, came the thought of Walter Wolsey.

"Go around a bit. Then come back to see me."

Pauline slid to the floor and stood up straight and tense, her brooding eyes black as night.

"It's no wonder if some of them—go back!" she whispered. She slipped to her knees. "Oh, Mary, Mother of God!" she cried, then sat staring ahead at the dingy wall with the paper hanging loose. In moments of great trial, man turns naturally to some higher power for help.

"I won't go back to see him," she stormed in a subdued voice, "and I can't go back—down *there*. I can't! I can't!"

The door of the room adjoining hers opened and shut noisily.

"You're late," said a shrill feminine voice, "and I've just had a row with the old lady about cooking. What made you so late?"

Pauline rose, brought back to the common round by the wrangling voices

of her neighbors which came clearly through the double doors that separated the two rooms, but did not make them very private. Heavy portières were hung over the big crack where the doors refused to dovetail, but these did not interfere with the sounds of conjugal happiness that penetrated constantly to Pauline's unwilling ears.

Now she moved across to the window. Immersed in her own problem, the wrangle in the next room was soon lost to her.

Saturday! Where would she go? And why was she Pauline Stevens, anyway? Why all this struggle to live? Who would care if she dropped out?

If she did not get a job with a road or a stock company soon, there were—San Antonio, Walter Wolsey, or the river. San Antonio! That she had fled from five years ago, when she had gone with such high hopes to the stage. Unhesitatingly she eliminated Wolsey. And of course she must eliminate the river, which would be a mortal sin. That left only San Antonio!

"Holy Mother, not that!" she cried, staring out into the dingy courtyard, her eyes unseeing.

Suddenly she straightened up, alert. Going over to the bed, she picked up the magazine with Laura Figlan's picture on the cover, and studied it long and intently. In her smoldering eyes was a passionate question. With a heavy sigh, she at last laid down the magazine and sat absently on the bed. The man and woman in the next room were talking in loud, excited voices, but their words did not penetrate the closed ears of Pauline's consciousness.

All at once she started up and went hurriedly out into the little hall and down to the lower floor.

"Come in!" called a cheery voice, in answer to her knock.

Pauline opened the door.

"Hello, girlie!" said the girl who had given her the magazine. "Find a seat

if you can. I'm packing. Leave for stock down in Oklahoma City to-morrow. I hate it, but there's absolutely nothing doing around this burg. A person is lucky to get anything."

Pauline made herself comfortable on an unoccupied space on the floor. Bed, chairs, and floor were heaped with clothes that were being packed in the two trunks standing open in the center of the room, one marked "Theater," the other "Hotel."

"I just got this to-day," the girl said. "You still seeking?"

"Yes," answered Pauline.

"Isn't it terrible? This war! Stock is about the only thing left. Road shows closing everywhere on account of transportation. Can't get baggage transferred." She went on packing without apology.

"Did you say Laura Figlan had broken her contract with Gossman?" Pauline asked at once.

"Can you beat it?" cried the girl, pausing dramatically. "If one of us did that, we'd never get another job! Talk about unprofessional! She just cabled that she can't open. Such a *little* matter, with the production all complete and——"

"But the show opens next Thursday, doesn't it?" broke in Pauline, in a curious half whisper.

"It was to. Company been rehearsing six weeks in the heat, and now this Norwegian woman throws them down flat!"

"What are they going to do?" asked Pauline.

"Do! What can they do but put the show in the warehouse?" The girl went back to her packing.

"Couldn't he get somebody else for the part?" There was tense eagerness in Pauline's voice.

"Course not. It would be as much as any woman's reputation is worth to undertake it. It's a Figlan part. Besides, nobody but a stock actress could get up

in it at this late day, even if they dared switch anybody else into it. The opening's only eight days off."

"Is the part so—big?"

"Big? Why, it's the whole show! Now what did I do with my misery cape?"

"What excuse did she—Miss Figlan—give?" Pauline questioned constrainedly.

"Got married. Gone on her honeymoon trip to Rome or some place," the girl answered.

"They ought to have made her come on when rehearsals started," said Pauline. "Then it wouldn't have happened."

"Make!" scoffed the girl. "I'd like to see anybody *make* one of those stars do anything! They think they run the earth, and, believe me, they just about do!"

There was silence. Pauline was sitting rigidly upright, the while her breath came unevenly and her great Spanish eyes blazed.

"She knew the part backwards," the girl went on directly, full of the subject. "She'd played it two years in London. Wasn't any use in her rehearsing all that time. Old Gossman did try, though, to get her to come over sooner, so a friend told me, but nothing doing. I guess she hadn't landed her bird. A count, she says, though she didn't give his name; so I take it he's a German."

"But a German wouldn't be in England." Pauline was just making talk.

"Not unless he was there for devilment," replied the girl. "I have a friend playing a small part in the company. It hasn't been officially given out yet that she's quit. Rehearsals called for to-morrow. But it leaked out somehow. Anyway, everybody in the company is wild over it."

Pauline rose.

"What's your hurry? Sit down," said the girl.



"You would not know me from yourself, would you, Miss Figlan?" She spoke to the picture in a soft, lilting voice.

"No, I must go. If I don't see you again, good luck."

"Thanks. Same to you, girlie. Hope you land something good. But if you take my advice, you'll grab the first thing offered you."

They shook hands heartily, and Pauline went back to her room. None of the promises to "write" were exchanged

that are usual with folk who have lived on visiting terms for several months.

They were just "ships that pass in the night." They had made the days of "seeking" bearable for each other; they might not touch again for years, if ever.

On entering her room, Pauline paused at the sound of her neighbor's voice:

"I got the cable and took it to him at the theater. My God, but he like to uv tore up the place! Begins to bawl me out about some lights, and I says: 'See here—you needn't get on your ear with me! I'm the assistant stage director—not the electrician.' None of the actors' know it yet; at least, the word hasn't been given out. Think of it! Six weeks' rehearsal!"

Pauline went over to the mirror and peered into it fixedly. Then she went to the bed and got the magazine with its flamboyant cover. Setting the picture up against the side of the mirror, she studied it, feature by feature.

The face of the great Norwegian looked directly at her out of somber black eyes. Her yellow hair was combed straight back from her forehead, with little fluffy tufts over each ear, from which dropped long jade earrings. A string of green jade beads was around her neck. She wore a white evening dress, and a red silk opera bag rested on her lap. Laura Figlan always affected the bizarre. Jade was her favorite jewelry, contrasting as it did with her pale gold hair and white skin with dazzling effect.

Pauline went to her trunk and brought out a good-sized candy box in which she kept all her stage "jewels." She took out a string of imitation jade beads, a ring, and a pair of long earrings. Then she brought a white muslin frock from her closet. It was beautifully laundered. Quickly removing the smart little blouse and skirt, she next took the heavy yellow braids from around her head and spread them over the back, arranging little tufts over her ears and leaving her forehead bare.

She adjusted the earrings, clasped the string of jade beads around her slim throat, and stood once more in front of the mirror before putting on the white frock. In her hand-embroidered bodice, cut no lower than Figlan's gown, the resemblance was startling.

The girl clasped her hands to her heaving bosom and stood rigid, a brooding wonder in her passionate eyes. Presently she elevated her chin, let her heavy lids droop, and began to look, not directly, but with a curious sidelong expression at herself, the while she lifted her hands with a quaint little foreign gesture.

"You would not know me from yourself, would you, Miss Figlan?" She spoke to the picture in a soft, lilting voice, her English quick and precise. Still holding the languid pose that the great actress affected herself, and was so prone to drop in the fire of her work, Pauline pondered deeply.

All at once she turned from the glass in a decisive way she had, slipped the white muslin frock over her head, and fastened it with trembling fingers. She examined with satisfaction her trim, well-shod feet. This was her one extravagance. Next she put on a little black hat with a single quill. Again she looked at herself intently, and again at the picture. Making a gesture of protest, as if not yet satisfied, she went and pulled great heaps of gaudy stuffs out of her trunk, leaving them in a pile on the floor. At last she came to a red plush opera cape of a deep American Beauty shade, for stage purposes.

Without a moment's hesitation, she cut a big square from it, seamed it up quickly on two sides, hemmed the top, and took the red cord from the neck of the cape, running it through the top; and lo, she held up a flaming bag! The effect was bizarre in the extreme—white frock, green jewelry, yellow hair, and the red bag.

"But that is what one must do—startle them, make them look at you. Maybe that's how you did it, Laura," she said to the picture. "You made them *see* you, with your bizarre colors. Then you made good, when you got your chance. And that's what I'll do if they give me the chance."

"I don't know what we'll do," came the voice of the man in the next room. "The whole company thrown out of work after six weeks! That woman ought to be tarred and feathered! A lot she cares for anybody else! She's an awful rotter, anyhow. They ought to have been prepared for something like this."

They had forgotten their quarrel and gone back to a discussion of what was to them the most important issue of the day.

Pauline opened her door softly, closed it, and ran through the narrow hall, downstairs, and out into the bright, hot street. It was nearing five o'clock. Gossman's general manager "saw" actors between four and five.

With a heart pounding so that it stifled her, she hurried to the Huron Theater Building in which were Gossman's offices.

The outer office was crowded as usual with chattering actors. Somebody noticed Pauline as she entered, and instantly a whisper ran over the crowd. It was impossible that she should escape notice.

With cool aloofness, she seated herself in the corner farthest from the door marked "Private" through which the potentate would come directly, for the purpose, not of "seeing" actors, but of scattering them. She meant to wait until they were all out, and she did not want to be seen by him until the right moment.

Intensely conscious of the curious glances turned in her direction, her somber, half-veiled eyes wandered insolently about.

CHAPTER II.

The crowd continued to increase. Directly Pauline, in her place against the wall, was lost to sight, for which she was thankful. She had a curious impression of arms and legs and a confused mingling of voices, laughter that was a little too gay, talk that had a hectic note in it, with now and then a deep rumble from the throat of a "heavy" man, like thunder in a cannon. She felt unutterably sick from the heavy pounding of her heart. The very magnitude of the thing she had undertaken overwhelmed her. She, an unknown actress, a player from small stock companies, had come for a star's part! She had, deliberately and to the minutest detail, made herself look like that highly colored picture on the cover of the magazine that every actor and manager had seen and would know at a glance. She would speak to Gossman's general manager in Figlan's voice, look at him out of Figlan's slow, rather cruel eyes, carry her manner, her gestures—all. Perhaps, oh, perhaps! Miracles did happen sometimes.

Every now and then she would hear some one whisper: "Laura Figlan." There would be a craning of necks in her direction, and Pauline's insolent regard of the crowd would increase. She would let them see that she scorned them, with their pretended indifference.

After what seemed an age to all that restless, nervous crowd, the door marked "Private" opened, and Mr. Dotson, general manager for Gossman, stood framed therein.

"We have nothing at present, and won't have for two or three weeks," he said at random to the crowd.

Instantly they began to surge toward the outer door. A few tried to get near him, to make doubly sure that he couldn't use them, at least; but he waved everybody away.

"Nothing. We have nothing. All parts are filled. See me again in a couple of weeks."

"Is it true that Laura Figlan has broken her contract?" asked one woman who had lingered to the last.

It is astonishing how such things get out, but it always happens! There is an effort at secrecy—and all Broadway whispers the secret.

"I hadn't heard it," replied Dotson coldly. And Pauline's heart went from her stomach down into her ice-cold feet. So it wasn't true—all that stuff the assistant director had retailed to his wife! What a fool she had made of herself! What an absurd figure she would appear in Dotson's eyes!

The woman, after an unsuccessful attempt at some light patter with him, got herself out with what dignity she could muster. Pauline felt paralyzed, unable to move.

Dotson's clouded eyes followed the inquisitive woman, then came back quite suddenly and rested on Pauline. She rose haughtily, unsmiling, her brooding eyes fairly daring him to laugh at her, and stood still, staring at him out of eyes that were heavy with tragic passion, even while her manner breathed insolence and disdain.

The smile died on his face, and for one minute he stared at her as if he could not believe his eyes. Then he almost jumped at her.

"You devil!" he cried, grabbing her hands, only to drop them and throw both arms around her in an excess of emotion that he could not repress. And before she could recover her astonishment, he had hold of her hands again and was talking joyfully, while he led her toward his private office.

"In the name of all that's wonderful, what did you do it for?" he cried. "You've had us about out of our minds all day! Who did you get to send that cable? I'm afraid the Old Man won't give you the prodigal welcome that I'm

giving you," he ran on, not waiting for her to answer his questions, and almost fawning on her. "My God, but it's good to see you! We were almost frantic! Show to open Thursday. You are a little devil, though!" His manner made the speech a compliment.

Pauline followed him in a sort of daze. He kept talking, talking.

"The Old Man will be just as glad to see you as I am, but he's so mad! However, now that you're here——" Dotson spread his hands as much as to say: "Nothing else matters."

"Sit down." He pushed a chair for her with the air of a waiter whose business is to serve her, and waited until she sat—this man who had looked over and through her so often!

"Now tell me all about yourself," he ran on as he sat, "and how things are on the other side of the pond. Many signs of war in London? Lord, but this is a relief! I must call the Old Man. You'll excuse me, Miss Figlan?"

He took down the receiver and called a number.

"Well, when he comes in, tell him Miss Figlan is in town. Yes, in New York. Right here in my office now. Be sure to tell him the minute he comes in."

He rattled the receiver hook till he got central; then called another number. Again Gossman was out, and again Dotson told them to tell him, the minute he came in, that Miss Figlan was right in his office. After repeating this for three or four times, he gave up.

Slowly it had dawned on Pauline, meanwhile—the staggering fact that he had mistaken her for Laura Figlan. She had come here to show him how much she could look and act like Miss Figlan, but it had never once entered her mind that she might actually be mistaken for the great Norwegian herself. And now that this had happened, she didn't know what to do about it. She had a feeling that he would resent her



"Where to?" Dotson asked. For one faintest fraction of a second she hesitated; then she answered: "The Biltmore."

when he found out that she had deceived him, even unwittingly. We all have a horror of making flagrant mistakes, and it is human to feel disgruntled toward any one who has betrayed us into one.

Dotson leaned back in his chair, the very picture of gratification and ingratiating friendliness. That she had, to gratify some whim of her own, thrown them into a panic and cost them dollars

and dollars for frantic cablegrams, made not the slightest difference. She was here! They were saved thousands of dollars! That was all that mattered.

"Well, well, well, little Figlan!" he beamed. Then: "But why don't you say something?" he cried exuberantly. "You haven't said a word!"

"You have not given me a chance," Pauline replied, in precise English, with the mincing lilt of the Norwegian. She

must let him see how much she could *act*, as well as *look*, like the star, before she owned up to the truth which would be sure to make him feel like a fool.

"Come to think of it, I haven't." He grinned. "But I'm so darned glad to see you! Excuse my French. See there? Your part." He pointed to the part lying on his desk. "I'd got it out thinking you might want to look it over. One sometimes gets stale on a part after playing it a long time."

He picked up the thick blue-bound pages and carelessly tossed them into Pauline's lap.

"I don't suppose you'll need it, but you may want to glance over it. I know you haven't given it a thought this summer. Well, tell me about yourself."

"What is there to tell?" Pauline smiled. Her ice-cold hands touched the great part; her heart hammered against the walls of her chest so hard that she was afraid he would hear her breath pump itself out in little gasps. A wonderful star-making part was there on her lap, and she could have it by simply keeping silent. It seemed unbelievable. "Opportunity knocks once."

The words seemed spoken aloud in her consciousness. It was the same voice that once spoke to the Man on the mount. Also, there came another voice: "Go around a bit. Then come back and see me."

"What is there to tell?" Dotson was repeating. "Why, a good deal, I should say. Where is that count you've let yourself be married to? Come through, now. And what was the idea of the cable, anyhow?"

"It was a joke," said Pauline, her hand closing fiercely over the part that had been thrown to her as by a miracle. Saturday she must give up her room. She had eighty cents in her purse. What harm could there be in taking what that other woman had cast away so lightly, and what she, Pauline,

needed so desperately? And yet—she must not! Surely he would let her have a trial.

Dotson threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"I don't know if the Old Man will see the joke. Can't say that I see it myself. But I'm too relieved to quarrel with you. Anyway, all's well that ends well."

Then he leaned forward and took both her hands in his and began to pat them, and tell her how beautiful she was, what a wonderful star she was, and how they had advertised her.

"The Old Man has simply spread himself," he concluded. "Fifty thousand dollars' worth of advertising, and another fifty thousand for the scenery. Naturally, he was wild at the thought of losing it all."

"But you could have put some one else in the part," Pauline ventured hopefully.

Dotson looked astonished; then leaned back and smiled blandly. They were funny—these stars.

"You know as well as I do," he replied, "that that production would have gone to the warehouse."

"But why?"

"Can you see any other star taking that part?" He grinned.

"Oh, no, it would have been as much as her reputation was worth," Pauline said, recalling the assistant director's words, while she fought off the suffocating feeling that threatened to overcome her. "But some other—some lesser actress—might have been glad," she went on.

"Put an unknown woman—or, for that matter, any woman—in that part after advertising Figlan!" scoffed Dotson. "Hardly! It isn't being done in the best families." He could afford to be frivolous now.

"You mean you wouldn't have *tried* anybody else in the part, even?" insisted Pauline.

"Of course not," he replied, surprise showing in his manner. "We *couldn't*! You know that."

"But the people who have rehearsed all this while?" she said, a note almost of pleading in her voice, though she did not drop the pretty, lilting accent.

"It would have been a crime," Dotson admitted, "but their loss would have been nothing to the Old Man's. Say, child, what're you trying to get at? You know as well as I do that we can't advertise Figlan and then give the public somebody else—anybody else."

"I am teasing," Pauline said, rising. She must get out of that office before she confessed the truth. She must have time to think this stupendous thing out, time to decide it and settle on what she must do. Satan always whispers:

"Wait! Think it over a bit. I'll help you."

"What's your hurry?" Dotson rose at once.

Glad as he was to see her, he did not try to detain her. Every minute of his time was precious. He had a rehearsal of a road company at seven, and meantime he had eaten no lunch.

"I'll put you in your cab," he said, closing his desk.

"Oh, don't bother," said Pauline hurriedly, still holding to that part as if she were afraid it would get away from her before she could decide what to do. Only one thought dominated her now. Here was a great star-making part; it had been given her; she had but to keep silent and it was hers; if she spoke, it would be taken from her.

"No bother," he answered graciously, anxious to do something, anything for her. "I'm going, anyhow. You certainly are looking fine—younger and better than when you were here last time. Must have been living the simple life." He grinned as they stepped into the elevator and were shot down to the street door.

Thinking of her weeks of deprivation, she answered truthfully:

"I have."

"Didn't you hold your cab?" he asked in surprise when they were on the street.

"No," she answered. "In these war times——"

"That's right," he put in. "Too much money wasted. I suppose you, having come into closer contact with things, feel it more than we do over here. It seems so far away. Hard to realize. We'll walk up a little way. There's a cab stand——"

"Really, I prefer to walk," Pauline protested.

"Nonsense! Here's one." He ran to the curb and hailed a passing taxi. "I'll go with you."

"No, don't—please!"

How anxious he was to serve her!

"Where to?" Dotson asked as he helped her into the car and started to step in with her.

For one faintest fraction of a second, she hesitated; then she answered:

"The Biltmore."

She had some difficulty in preventing him from going with her. He really was busy, but he was afraid of not showing her all the attention she might expect. Finally persuaded, he repeated the order to the driver and shut the door, saying as he did so:

"I've called rehearsal for eleven o'clock to-morrow morning at the Huron Theater, but if that doesn't suit you——"

"It does," she replied. "Perfectly."

And finally she got away from him.

He stood, hat in hand and all smiles, almost obsequious as she drove away—this man who had seemed such a big man to her yesterday, so unapproachable. As she had felt small before him, so now he appeared small before the woman he believed to be Laura Figlan. What a strange world it was, with its grades and grades of greatness! Some-

how the Dotsons of life could never again seem so awe-inspiring to her.

She leaned back in the taxi in the languid manner of the great Norwegian and drove away, clutching in her hand the means to the thing that men and women have sold their souls for from the beginning when it hung on the tree of knowledge, and will go on selling their souls for until the end of man.

CHAPTER III.

Pauline stopped the cab.

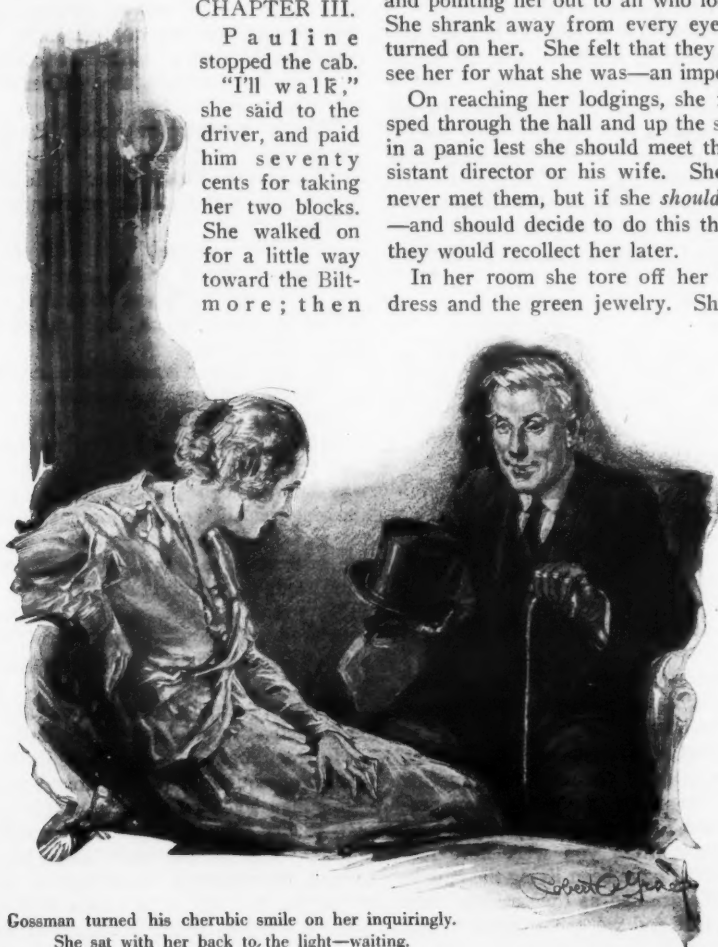
"I'll walk," she said to the driver, and paid him seventy cents for taking her two blocks. She walked on for a little way toward the Biltmore; then

turned, and almost ran back to her dingy little room in the west forties.

And suddenly she had a furtive, hunted feeling. She wished she had had more money, so she could have kept the cab till almost home. She was so conspicuous in her white frock, glaring jewelry, and red bag, with those flaming pictures of Laura Figlan staring at her from every news stand, accusing her and pointing her out to all who looked. She shrank away from every eye that turned on her. She felt that they must see her for what she was—an impostor.

On reaching her lodgings, she fairly sped through the hall and up the stairs, in a panic lest she should meet the assistant director or his wife. She had never met them, but if she *should* now—and should decide to do this thing—they would recollect her later.

In her room she tore off her white dress and the green jewelry. She felt



Gossman turned his cherubic smile on her inquiringly.

She sat with her back to the light—waiting.

better after that was done. Then she went over to the dresser where, still propped against the mirror, the great, heavy-lidded eyes of Laura Figlan stared accusingly at her.

Taking up the magazine, she looked at the picture for a few minutes wonderingly.

"I wouldn't be taking anything from you," she said. "I couldn't take anything from you. If I fail, I'll be known for what I am, an impostor! And you will only shine the brighter by comparison. It will give you thousands of dollars' worth of advertising—a new kind of advertising—while I shall be ruined for all time. There would be no smallest chance for me ever to come back. I'd be a laughing-stock even in the small companies. But—if I succeed—how can that hurt you? I'll simply tell the truth after the first performance. I'll say I couldn't get a chance; this offered; I took it. Nothing could undo the fact that I had made good—that I could act! I'll have saved Mr. Gossman thousands of dollars, and made myself famous. They wouldn't laugh, then. Nobody laughs at success, however got. It's only failure they laugh at. The salary—you don't need it. I——"

She laid the picture down and looked around the dingy room.

"And I am not permitted to keep even this!" she murmured, going over to the window and sitting down to try to think it out and decide. "And there are the people who have rehearsed so long to think of."

Curiously, she did not once consider the difficulty of the big part of a hundred and fifty typewritten "sides," which she would be expected to know *to-morrow morning* and which it was not humanly possible for even a trained stock actress to learn in a night. She thought only of the great chance that was hers for the taking, her desperate need, and the certainty of loss should

she confess. Against that was her natural abhorrence of lies and deceit of any sort.

Night fell softly over the tangle of clothes lines as she stared dumbly out into the court. Some of them were drawn in and relieved of their day's burdens. After a while one was filled with wet clothes by a woman who would not admit, by hanging out her clothes in the daylight, that she did her own laundry.

A door opened and shut next Pauline's room.

"Well, what do you know?" came the assistant director's cheerful voice. "Figlan was in the office this afternoon."

"In the office! Then she was here when the cable——"

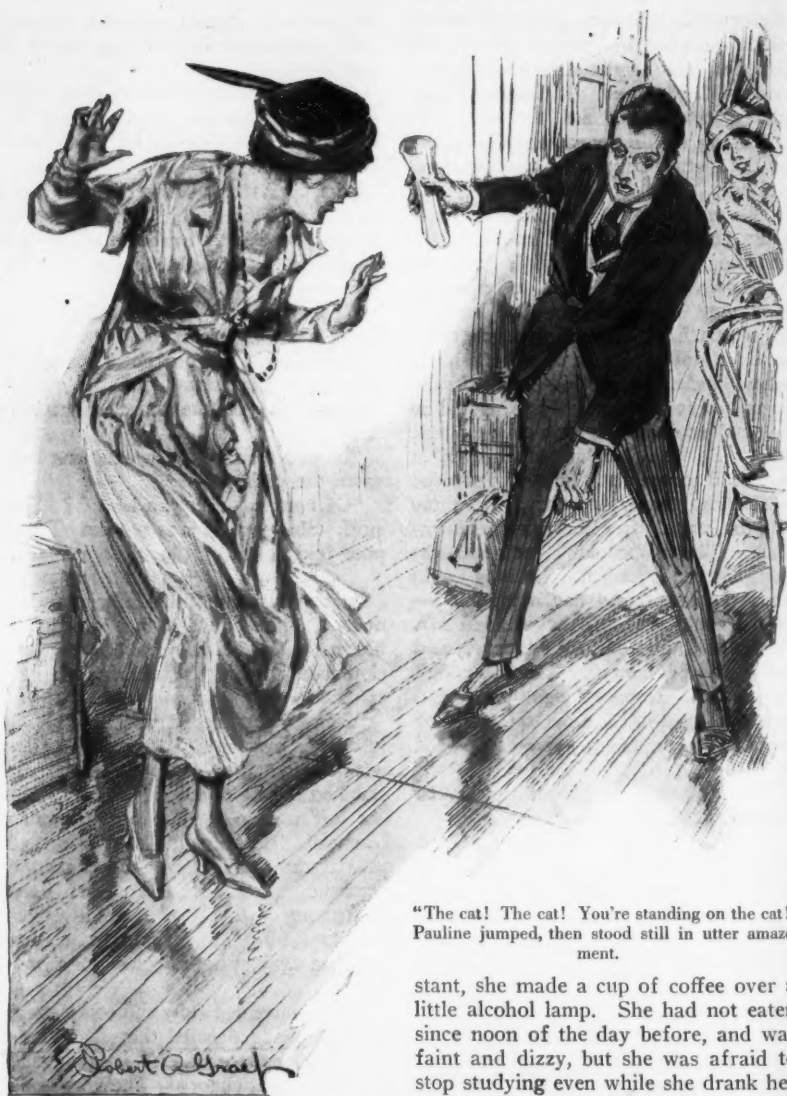
"Of course. Can you beat it? Star stuff. She says it was a joke. Damn poor joke, I call it."

A rasping sound outside her window made Pauline pause in her walk about the room. The lady who hung her clothes out at night was taking them in at dawn.

"Success for her means not having to do her own wash," thought Pauline whimsically. She held the great part clutched tightly in her right hand, while her left was pressed to her throbbing forehead. All night long she had walked the floor, a wet towel around her head, fighting off fatigue and sleep by keeping on her feet, pounding lines and cues into her fevered brain that thumped against her temples in hot protest.

She had decided fully and completely, as she always decided things. Whatever happened, or didn't happen, she must have that chance! The very gods seemed to have flung it into her hands. She would not let her opportunity get away.

Then, without a thought of the million difficulties and problems that must



"The cat! The cat! You're standing on the cat!" Pauline jumped, then stood still in utter amazement.

stant, she made a cup of coffee over a little alcohol lamp. She had not eaten since noon of the day before, and was faint and dizzy, but she was afraid to stop studying even while she drank her coffee. She must know that part by eleven o'clock! She must know it! Dotson would expect it—everybody would expect it. Figlan had played it for two years in London.

beset her path at every step, she had set about mastering the problem in hand—the mammoth part.

Without putting it aside for an in-





At seven o'clock, an alarm clock sounded in the adjoining room, and Pauline heard some one stirring softly about. There was no conversation, so she knew that the assistant director, who had risen early to attend his multitude of duties, was trying not to wake his wife. Directly his door opened and shut softly.

And still Pauline went on walking the floor, studying. She took the wet towel off her head to let her hair dry, and her temples throbbed harder than ever. And the nausea resulting from fatigue and hunger, though poignant, was overshadowed by a sickening fear

of the hour of eleven, that came on and on, relentlessly ticked off by the little clock on her dresser.

If she only had something to eat! But she daren't go out for breakfast. She must study. Also, she had only ten cents in her purse.

Directly she began going to sleep every few minutes. The odor of coffee and bacon told her that her neighbor was up, and waked her effectually. The husband came in.

At his first words, Pauline's heart stood still.

"Say, funny thing happened. Figlan told Dot she was stopping at the Biltmore, and the Old Man goes over to see her, and what do you know? She wasn't there, and hadn't been there! Can you beat that? Almost had a row with the clerk. Told him he knew better—she *was* there. He's all up in the air about it."

The man kept talking, but Pauline heard no more. Feverishly she put up her heavy yellow braids again, following the headdress of the picture and adjusting the green beads and earrings. She must go at once to the Biltmore. Fool, not to have thought of it! Why had she come back here? But of course she hadn't decided right away. With hands that shook as with a heavy chill, she put her blue serge dress on and the little black hat. Snatching up the red bag, she slipped out hurriedly and at Times Square went to the telephone and called the Biltmore, then hung up suddenly.

She couldn't go to the Biltmore. They *knew* she had not been there. It would be impossible to explain. The Belmont! The names were somewhat alike; she would say she had mixed them. A lie! The first one—and there would be others! Hundreds of them! For success, so various and elusive, Pauline Stevens, as others before her have done, began that moment to barter her peace of mind.

She got the Belmont on the phone. "Is this the Belmont?" she said. "Well, this is—Miss—Figlan—" Her voice almost died in her throat.

"Who?" asked the clerk.

"Laura Figlan!" The words came more firmly the second time. A lie always comes easier the second time.

"Oh, yes, Miss Figlan," replied the clerk in instant recognition. "We knew you were expected. Anything we can do for you?"

"Yes," Pauline replied. "Register for me—please."

"Certainly, Miss Figlan. Suite?" His voice was ingratiating, obsequious.

"Yes, please." How they all bowed to that name! How wonderful it must be if one were the real person for whom it was intended and had this adulation all the time as a matter of course!

Where was she? Could he send a taxi somewhere for her? He had a beautiful suite—just what she would want. When should they expect her? Was there nothing he could do?

"Should any one call me," said Pauline, "please say that I am at the Huron Theater rehearsing and may not be in before five or six." She did not intend to go to the hotel till she had to.

"All right, Miss Figlan. Glad to have you with us." She hung up with a feeling of unutterable weariness. Well, that was taken care of! And she would not be asked to register. That she could not have done.

"Success comes high," she thought.

She wondered what the next difficulty would be and did not try to plan what she would do in this situation or that. She knew that the expected things, the things she was prepared for, would not happen. It was the unexpected that would be forever coming up, things for which she had made no preparation.

The very urgent need, now, was breakfast. She could not go through the ordeal that was before her without

it. Even a cup of coffee would be better than nothing.

She walked along toward the Huron Theater absolutely worn out. Her feet seemed too heavy to carry her along.

"Taxi, Miss Figlan," called a man, recognizing her from the flaring posters all over town, with her yellow hair, dark eyes, and green jewelry.

She stopped, surprised. He jumped down from his driver's seat and held open the door. She stepped in, then realized what she had done. She had a curious, dazed feeling. The strain, the sleepless night, the long continued mental effort, together with hunger, were getting the best of her. She leaned back and closed her eyes. She must study.

"Where to, Miss Figlan?" The taxi driver was evidently proud of his recognition of her.

"The Belmont," she said, not knowing where else to say.

It was as well. She had to go there—to get it over.

But why had she taken this cab? Could the man have her arrested? She was so tired that it didn't matter much what happened. It felt good to sit down and rest. He was taking her out of the way. He thought she was not familiar with the town, and he wanted to run the meter up. Where was she? Oh, yes.

Ah, here was the Belmont. Now what? He helped her out. She put her hand in her purse and fished around helplessly as if she knew she had it, but— Her face grew red, her hands cold. Why did the man stand gaping like that? What was she to do? Acknowledge that she was broke? Laura Figlan! How ridiculous! She laughed, though she had no feeling of laughter in her. The man laughed, too.

"That's all right, Miss Figlan," he said. "You can have it charged at the desk. Or maybe you'd like to open an account."

"Yes—that would be better." She

could hardly answer him, so great was her relief.

"I'll tell 'em at the office, and they'll send you a coin. Will you just sign here?"

"No, I'll have it charged at the desk," she said, hastily recalling that she would have to sign Figlan's name. That speech in the third act was so badly put together—made it hard to memorize.

"Any baggage?" asked the doorman.

"No, none. It will come—later."

The clerk recognized her at once. He had reserved Parlor A for her. Had she had her breakfast? No, she hadn't. Well, would she see her rooms now or have breakfast? Why, she would have breakfast.

Heavens, why hadn't she thought of that before? Of course she could have whatever she wanted and charge it on her bill. She would have thought of that under ordinary circumstances. Now she had only one thing in her mind—that part.

She ordered oatmeal, Southern fried chicken, biscuit, grits, and omelet. She felt that there was not enough food in the hotel to appease her hunger. And still she studied that part. She dared not stop.

Suddenly, in the midst of the difficult third-act speech, came the thought that she, Pauline Stevens, had entered upon a life of luxury and was *charging the bills to Laura Figlan!* How horrible! This was one of the unexpected things she had not thought of.

"Miss Figlan!" She jumped. A boy was at her elbow. "Mr. Dotson is calling on the wire."

She went at once.

"Well, I'm glad I thought to call up the Belmont," came Dotson's voice, as soon as she had answered. "It just came to me that maybe I had made a mistake—that you had said the Belmont instead of the Biltmore. And I almost had a fight with the clerk at the Bilt-

more because he said you weren't registered there." Dotson laughed at the joke on himself, then added apologetically, "I have so much on my mind. Then the shock of your cable and your turning up right away—It's no wonder if I get things mixed."

Pauline breathed a deep sigh of relief. So she hadn't had to tell a lie about that. The expected thing had dissolved into thin air.

"Mr. Gossman wants to know if you'll see him for a little while before rehearsal? He wants to say howdy-do, and also to see you about those light effects that he says you had at the Gaiety. If you can give him a few minutes—"

"Certainly," she said. "I'll be delighted."

If she would give him a few minutes! The great Gossman! She could not adjust her mind to the star viewpoint. It seemed to her that Dotson must surely be making fun of her.

She hung up and trailed back into the dining room. And they wanted to inquire of her about certain light effects in that London production that she had never seen! Escaping the menace of discovery through the hotel blunder, she had walked straight into another, and a greater. And it was going to be like this all the time. She sat down, but her appetite was gone. What could she say to Gossman about those lights?

She got up from the table and went out without signing for her breakfast and leaving her part behind. It was the first time it had been out of her hand and mind for fifteen hours. It had been the one big problem, and before it had been solved, another had arisen so big as to push it out completely.

The waiter came running after her with her part and the check. She signed Parlor A. Whatever else she did, she would not sign Laura Figlan's name to her bills.

The clerk reproved the waiter for

troubling her, and she was shown up to her magnificent suite, there to await Gossman and—what?

CHAPTER IV.

Henry Gossman, large in person and importance, tramped about Dotson's private office in impotent fury, raging, storming, pouring out his wrath on his general manager, who studied a manuscript in complete deafness. The big man was not angry at Dotson; he was angry at Laura Figlan, the more so because he dared not say one word to her of his true feelings. And Gossman was accustomed to saying whatever he pleased, to whomever he pleased, and wherever he pleased, within the confines of his kingdom. But this woman, this Norwegian who was notoriously temperamental—which is to say she had a notorious temper—must not be crossed.

She had once refused to go on in London—had kept a packed house waiting while somebody went out for her wine; then had walked out, because the house manager, misguided man, had gone back to protest. And she was, as Gossman well knew, quite capable of taking the next boat back to London, should he even hint that he was in the least put out by her "joke." How that riled him, that joke that had cost him a hundred dollars in frantic cables—and a hundred thousand for a day, for he had seen, in his mind, the entire Figlan production go to the warehouse, and the fact could not have caused him more suffering for that one day than the fiction had done. Not that Gossman could not easily afford to lose twice that amount, but he was of a nature that suffered keenly through the smallest loss.

And now, after giving him such a turn, this woman had turned up calmly with the announcement that it was a joke! And expected him to see it!

"She wants more money!" shouted

Gossman. "That's it! I know the meaning of her damned joke! She wanted to throw a scare into me and then tell me she wanted a better percentage, and with that joke in mind, I'd give it to her without a murmur! But I'll see her in hell before I'll do it! Do you hear me, Dot? I'll see her in hell—and the whole production with her—before I'll do it! Do you hear me, Dotson? Do you hear me? Stop reading that script and listen to me! Put it down! Put it down, I say!"

Leaning back in his big chair, the young man let the script rest on his lap and looked calmly up at his superior.

"She's waiting for you, Mr. Gossman," Dotson remarked. "It's ten-thirty now, and rehearsal is called for eleven. She'll be peeved if you keep her too long."

Gossman glared, straightened his hat to a more dignified angle on his big, round head, and strode out without a word.

"The Belmont!" he snapped at the chauffeur, as he climbed into his car.

All the way to the hotel, his face was heavy with the black rage that was on him. He frowned at the clerk who had him announced, and at the elevator boy who showed him to her door. His frown grew as he stood outside waiting for her to answer. He could not bring himself out of it! Star or no star—she had acted outrageously! Nobody could treat him like that and get away with it! He meant to tell her so!

Gossman's knock fell on Pauline's ears like the sound of a hammer on a coffin. For one instant, she stood rigid, unable to move, an unutterable wave of sickness sweeping over her. The room reeled. She had an impulse to run. Then her great eyes blazed, she set her teeth together, drew herself up to her full height, and went firmly toward the door.

Gossman's frown became night black at the delay. He hated waiting outside

people's doors. He hated waiting anywhere. Especially did he hate waiting on this Norwegian, who gave herself such airs. Fury overspread his face and seemed to extend even over his round figure. The doorknob rattled, the door opened—and, as by magic, the black cloud rolled away from his round face, a cherubic smile taking its place.

"You *kid!*" he cried, grasping both her hands in joyous welcome. "Thought you'd give the old man a bad half hour, did you? Well, you succeeded! Only it was a bad day instead of a half hour. Little scamp! Well, how's the handsome Laura? I'll swear if you don't get younger and prettier every day!" He talked on, seeming not to notice the smile that she strove so vainly to make cordial.

"Come in," said Pauline faintly. She had lowered all the shades, throwing the rooms into deep shadow.

Curiously, the actor who can portray the sufferings of others with consummate skill, fairly sweeping a great audience along with him, may have no art that will serve his own needs in hours of deep personal suffering. He becomes then not an artist, poised, controlled, with a thousand tricks at his command to be skillfully juggled, but a human soul—helpless, uncertain, and fearful; the more so, because he is more highly strung than the average man.

Gossman entered in his heavy, jovial way, found for himself the most substantial seat in the room, and turned his cherubic smile on her inquiringly. She sat on a *chaise longue* with her back to the light—waiting.

"Now tell me—come through. What did you do it for? And where's that count?"

He made a show of peering under chairs and the *chaise longue* on which Pauline sat, twisting about in a most undignified manner that was extremely unbecoming to his pompous person.

"Where is he?"

"That was part of—the joke," she replied constrainedly, but breathing a great sigh of relief.

Pauline, relieved though she was to see that he absolutely did not detect the deception—as far as her appearance went, was at the same time in a cold terror of that moment when he would begin to talk to her about the London production. She spoke only when forced to, keeping her great, heavy-lidded eyes veiled, lest she should see fright therein; and it gave her an aloof expression that led the big man entirely astray. To him she seemed to be giving herself airs. And the more haughty and distant she seemed, the more determined he was to thaw her out, to draw her into a hearty friendliness. He launched into an elaborate account of all he had done for her—the magnificent production he was giving her, and also what he intended doing for her. At last, unable to draw more than monosyllables from her, he spoke of the London production.

"It was the lighting in the third act that I wanted to talk to you about."

It had come—the moment when she must discuss with him a play he had seen, and of which she had no faintest notion, so far as stage effects were concerned!

There was no cringing, however, in this girl who had enlisted in the great army struggling for success, to fight and die, if need were, to win. She was afraid—yes, as the soldier is afraid before the battle, then dashing into the thick of things under fire, forgetting fear, eager only to meet his foe and have done with him.

Lifting her great eyes to the man's face, Pauline looked directly at him for the first time since he had entered the room, and there was in that look the smoldering fire of the Latin that threatened to leap out in a consuming blaze at the first need.

Gossman, alert, for all his heavy playfulness, versed in reading people, saw, and he, too, mobilized. Now she would show her hand!

For one instant, they sat there each measuring the other—watching, waiting, each for the other to spring his mine and each ready to fight to the death. To Pauline, it meant life itself. She saw her whole future lying between them. She would not let this man take it from her. To Gossman, it meant thousands of dollars. He saw great piles of it between them. He would not let this cool, haughty woman, who looked like a girl in spite of her dissipation, take it from him. He could see that she meant to use this matter of the lighting as an excuse to break her contract unless he acceded to her demands. He would yield in the matter of the lighting, if need be. She should have no excuse whatever.

"Did you like that third-act lighting?" he asked.

"Why——" she hesitated.

"I see you didn't," he broke in, taking advantage of her hesitation to get in his own views. "Neither did I," he went on heartily. "I see you have good judgment. Subdued lights are all wrong for that act. Bright stage is what is wanted. Don't you agree?"

Was that all?

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Gossman," Pauline said, veiling her eyes to keep him from seeing the intense relief in them, then lifting them and smiling in bright, frank complaisance.

So sudden and unexpected was the change in her that Gossman was quite taken aback, almost suspicious. Figlan's London manager had told him expressly that this lighting was Miss Figlan's own idea, and in direct opposition to his judgment. But when the great Figlan made up her mind on a point, there was just one thing to do—yield.

"Well, bless my soul, but you're a

nice, agreeable child!" Gossman cried, rising before she could have time to change her mind. "Not that I expected you to be otherwise," he added cunningly, "but you know, after a woman has played a part for some time, it may annoy her to have any changes made. And it's my intention to see that you have things exactly as you want them. We're going to make your stay in America so pleasant that you'll never want to leave us."

Pauline saw that for some reason he was as relieved as she was, and as much afraid of making a misstep. It was curious. Her mind seemed to clear instantly as if a fog had lifted from it, and there came to her an odd sense of values. She stood before this fawning man and recalled the one time when she had seen him before—surrounded by fawning men and women. How anxious they had been to please him, and how afraid! Just as he was now anxious to please her, and afraid—of what?

"'Folks is just folks,'" she quoted mentally.

Watching every change in her, Gossman saw her softened expression, as well as the slight disdain that crept into her smile. This, however, was no time to notice the latter, but rather to press his advantage in her softer mood.

"Is there anything you want to give out to the papers?" he asked. "Want to see any reporters?"

"No, no," she replied hastily. "Don't let them come near me."

He caught the note of panic in her voice and wondered what new devilry she had got herself into that she should be afraid to talk with the sleuths of the press. He knew she had always sought, rather than avoided, notoriety—of whatever kind. This must be something pretty bad. Oh, well—he was not interested in her escapades, but in the box-office receipts.

"You're right," he said. "It's better

to be exclusive. Besides, we've covered all the ground. Of course, I won't let them come near you." He took her hand. He was getting on famously with her. "You're just a great, big kid!" he said. How well he knew the value of that phrase! It had never failed him, with women of Figlan's age. He was still holding her hand. Now he let go of it.

"What am I saying good-by for?" he laughed. "Come on, put on your things, and I'll run you over to your rehearsal."

And so the fear of that rehearsal again fell upon her. She must *show what she knew*—which was nothing.

Pauline Stevens was not a coward. She could face anything where she had one chance for fight. But here she had not, and she knew it. She had acted the fool—and she must meet a fool's defeat. For here, at least, was the expected thing that could not fail to come—not, perhaps, in the way she thought, but come it must.

CHAPTER V.

"Yes, I know her. Met her in London," drawled a broad-shouldered young man in khaki, threading his big car through the Fifth Avenue traffic. "Where do you stop?"

"Drop me at the Armory," replied Dotson. Spare, dark, and alert, he contrasted not unpleasingly with the brown giant at his side. "There's no question but that she's beautiful, in spite of her dissipation," he went on, going back to the Norwegian actress, whom they had been discussing.

"You think so?" questioned First Lieutenant Lewis, an American aviator who had just returned from France with great honor for daring. He had been twice captured by the enemy, escaping once with one of their own planes, had brought down five German craft the following day, and had limped back into the French line with a badly

crippled machine and an ugly wound for himself. He had been decorated with the French Cross and had gone to England to recover. From there he had been sent to America to lend a hand in the second Liberty Loan. And New York society fêted and made much of him, both for his heroism and for his handsome person and engaging manner.

Young girls and their mothers smiled on him, young matrons flirted with him, and men liked him for the frank smile that lay in his cool gray eyes and for his wholesome outlook on life. He and Dotson had been friends almost from boyhood.

"Don't you think her lovely?" questioned Dotson in some surprise.

"Can't say that I do," replied Lewis. "She's striking, with that tall, sinuous figure and yellow hair."

"And glorious, midnight eyes," put in Dotson. Being accustomed to feminine beauty, he rarely raved about any one.

"It's her eyes that I don't like," replied the young lieutenant. "They're cruel and bitter. I'd hate to incur her enmity. I can easily imagine her slipping a knife into any one who she thought had wronged her."

"Curiously, I don't see that," replied Dotson. "And I was looking for it, too. I'd seen her once from the front, and the same thing had come to me; but it was evidently the part. I was struck by a total absence of that expression yesterday. Deep, somber, almost tragic, but never cruel—they are the most glorious eyes I've ever looked into and, believe me, I've seen orbs!" he finished with a laugh.

"Look out, old man!" grinned Lewis. "Don't get too enthusiastic! The fair Laura has some several dozen scalps decorating her heartless person now."

"Oh, don't worry about me," replied Dotson. "I've had enough of women to do me for a while. Besides, I'm not big enough game for her to bother with.



"Please charge——" began Pauline. "Of course," hastily broke in madam. "It is my pleasure."

You're more in her line—a handsome American hero with all New York at the waggle of your little finger."

"Do you want to walk the rest of the way?" threatened Lewis.

They both laughed, and began to discuss the crowds on the Avenue. Directly they turned into Madison Avenue and the car stopped at the Armory.

"I'll drop back for you if you'll say when," said Lewis.

"Twelve-thirty. I want to get over to the Huron Theater before the re-

hearsal is over, to find out if there's anything that I can do for her majesty. These stars!" He lifted his hands in a gesture of despair. "Come in with me and say hello to her if you like."

"All right. I'll be here at twelve-thirty," replied Lewis.

One by one the company trailed into the Huron Theater—languid, sleepy-eyed folk who had been forced to rise at ten a. m. and were only half awake at the unholy hour of eleven.

Miss Alice Nestor, a tall, grim old woman, leathery faced and yellow, who rarely smiled on a world that had not been unkind to her, came first. She found a seat on a pile of rugs over in a dark corner of the stage, and began to read a cheap novel. The ingénue, small and blond, brought in a copy of Lombroso, and Miss Fallon, fat and gray and smiling, sat comfortably on a low footstool and began to knit. Miss Stacy, the doll-faced maid in the play, came in like an old woman. The men—a young, dandified juvenile, two gaunt old character actors, and a fat comedian—sat on chairs and gossiped about their star.

"They say she's an awful boozier," said one of the character men.

"A short life and a merry one," say I," put in the juvenile flippantly. "Laura's the goods, say I."

"Fill the cup!" cried the fat comedian, in a deep rumbling voice, struggling to recall the rest of the quotation; then finishing with, "For to-morrow—why, to-morrow I may be myself with yesterday's seven thousand years." He had had ambitions to play tragedy, and never missed a chance to recite heavy, sonorous lines.

"To-day," is her motto, evidently," replied the character man who had not yet spoken. At the same time, he gave up his chair to the assistant stage manager, who needed it on the stage. "She's certainly one wild colt."

"Who's that?" asked Lawrence, coming for another of the chairs.

"Figlan the Fair," cried the juvenile.

Tom Lawrence, the director, and his assistant were setting the stage for the first act. Chairs and tables were arranged on the big, barren space, so unalluring by daylight. The doors and a grand stairway were marked by two chairs placed near together, the windows by one chair. A piano, a bookcase, and a large palm were represented by a single chair; two chairs were set

together for a divan. Tables were represented by tables—awful ones that would not be permitted in a store clerk's kitchen.

The casual observer would have seen in all this merely an untidy grouping of old chairs and tables; a critical observer would have noticed a definite arrangement of disreputable old furniture; the people sitting or standing about on that dim stage saw a magnificent drawing-room grow under the director's hand, with handsome furniture, splendid rugs, and fine bronzes. They could have told you that over to the right, on a wall which you could not see, hung a painting for which the wealthy owner of this room had paid a fabulous sum; that to the left was a big fireplace with a bright fire burning in it. There was a Chinese god upstage near the grand piano, to the right of the tall palm beside the arched doorway, which you did not see. And the old, stained floor cloth was the final triumph. There were several Persian rugs, but the *pièce de résistance* was a rug of gold and black, a thousand years old. The Sacred Cat of China glared blackly from its center—and on this the owner allowed nobody to step. A chalked cross marked it out to the initiated. A snowstorm raged outside right where they all sat perspiringly about.

Pauline, entering with Gossman, saw none of this, for she had not been here on that first day when it had all been carefully pointed out to the others of the company for the first and last time. It would not be pointed out to her because she was supposed to be familiar with it through two years of association. What she saw in the carefully arranged chairs and tables was not what would have been seen by the casual or the critical observer, nor yet what was seen by the company, but—Waterloo!

No thought of retreat came to her, however. She had crossed her Rubicon. It must be a great empire—or St. Helena. She suffered horribly, as

deep natures suffer, but—the stake was worth the fight.

Lawrence, a thin, nervous man with mouse-colored hair, ran forward, smiling broadly. Gossman introduced him to Pauline in his pompous way, and he shook her limp hand effusively.

The assistant director, Pauline's neighbor at the lodging house—who is really a person of no importance, but a sort of lackey, or script holder, for the real director—came forward more timidly. Gossman introduced him, then promptly ignored him. And, as the English would say, he just sort of trickled back to his place down near the dead footlights. Certainly he didn't turn and walk back, as that might have been interpreted as discourtesy to the queen. He edged and backed away, until he was safely in place.

"Girls," Gossman called to the two old ladies and the little ingénue over on the other side of the dim stage, with its heaps of furniture, rugs, and scenery stacked against the dingy brick walls, "come here!"

The two old ladies rose, taking this form of address as a matter of course. Women of seventy are "girls" among stage folk.

"How are you, Henry?" called Miss Nestor, the grim old woman, holding her finger in place in her novel as she trailed across the stage, followed by the very small, very young-looking person and the fat old woman.

"Hello, old dears!" said Gossman, this salutation including the very young person, who smiled her acknowledgment.

"Miss Figlan, girls—Miss Nestor, Miss Fallon, Miss Dewey." He indicated each with a wave of his hand.

The fat old woman and little ingénue greeted Pauline with a sort of constrained cordiality, the attitude toward the great of the near-great who do not know just how they will be received and will not permit any evidence

of currying favor to appear in voice or manner.

Miss Nestor took Pauline's hand unsmilingly, without cordiality or discourtesy. She looked, however, straight into Pauline's eyes in a way that puzzled and disturbed the girl. It was as if the grim old woman were searching or waiting for something. Pauline tried to be gracious, but succeeded only in appearing very aloof and distant; as, indeed, she was distant—locked tight in the house of her own quaking soul, that most tragic of all prisons for the guilty.

After a few bromidic remarks about the heat and the war, they got themselves away in much the same fashion as did the assistant director. All but Miss Nestor. After that moment of searching in which she seemed to sweep every line of Pauline's face with her keen old eyes, she dropped the girl's hand and walked deliberately away to one of the stage dressing rooms.

The leading man strolled over with just the right amount of unhurried eagerness, took Pauline's hand in a way that was a mixture of nonchalance and dignified pleasure, as if to say: "We are the leading people—what?" and inquired about "the other side," in the tone of one who speaks of a loved habitat.

Gossman soon led Pauline to the first box, which was almost level with the stage. He helped her over the railing, and they sat down to watch the rehearsal.

"I want you to be where you can get a line on the people," he said. "Good cast. I was very particular—wanted to give you the best support I could get. I knew you were actress enough to want that. Some of our upstart stars, who can't act a lick themselves, are afraid to be surrounded by people who can." He flattered her in that offhand way at every opportunity.

At another time, Pauline would have

been impressed, but now she scarcely noted it, and Gossman noted that she didn't, and thought it was because she was so accustomed to admiration.

"Would you like to conduct, Miss Figlan?" Lawrence asked, running over to the box where she sat.

"No, no," Pauline whispered thickly. Her breath was beginning to come with difficulty.

The director went back to his place in the center of the stage down near the footlights, and the rehearsal began. No parts were used. All knew their lines and worked with the easy assurance of experience.

They were all well-known people. Pauline knew them down to the smallest part. Every one of them received more money than she ever had got for the biggest emotional lead she had ever done. And she had presumed to try to play star to them! The magnitude of her daring came to her now as it had not done before in the stress of her temptation and desperate plunge into the lines of the part, which, taking every ounce of her mind, had left her no time for thought. And then the other events of the morning had followed in such quick succession. Even now she must not let herself think and so weaken her spirit. Besides, there were still those lines! Over and over she tried to recall the trunants—one here, one there—while Gossman whispered to her now and again as the rehearsal proceeded.

"My God, Miss Nestor!" he called out directly. "Can't you put a little life into your work? Who ever told you you could act, anyhow?"

"Nobody, these past fifteen years, Henry," the old woman retorted grimly, but in perfect good humor. She had been in his employ just that length of time and drawing a splendid salary for her acting. He did not resent her familiarity or the impertinence of her reply. In fact, it was because of her

caustic tongue and unruffled temper that they got along so well.

From time to time, Gossman would call out sharply to Lawrence some direction, which he in turn would repeat to the people in the scene. Once Gossman and the two men got into an argument about a bit of business. Both appealed to Pauline. Because Lawrence was the under dog, with stars and near-stars and authors and producers at his throat, she upheld him. Gossman yielded graciously, and Lawrence looked his appreciation.

"Girls, girls!" he cried, turning back to the stage. "Please! This is not a pink tea!"

One of the old ladies and the very young person, who had stepped out of the set to discuss the rumor that skirts were getting shorter, scurried back into place. At the same time, the juvenile man made a hurried entrance.

"You came right through the wall, Mr. Sax!" cried Lawrence. "Now go back and come through the door, please."

The juvenile man went out of the set and back between two chairs, and stage ethics were in order. Every now and again, Gossman would snap out at somebody. He was not unkind, but it was his way of evening things. He had been basely treated; he must have his revenge where he could.

"Trip, trip, Miss Dewey!" the big man called scornfully. "You're a little bird woman—not a work ox!"

Miss Dewey smiled apologetically, then made an impudent *moue* at him.

Pauline could not concentrate on her lines. She was acutely aware of every move, every word that was uttered.

Presently Lawrence came smilingly over to the box, extending his hand toward Pauline—and she knew that her hour had come!

"Why, your hand is like ice!" Lawrence said, as she stepped over the low

railing to the stage. "Aren't you feeling well?"

"I didn't have a very good night," she replied truthfully, "and my head is rather heavy."

The two men exchanged knowing glances behind her back. Figlan with a heavy head in the morning looked suspicious to them.

Walking with her over to the place of her entrance, Lawrence stood talking to her for a few seconds. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of a sentence—and Pauline's heart seemed to stop on the same beat. Her cue was at hand!

It came! And she passed between the two chairs that represented the grand stairway, which had not been used by any one else. The entrance—that is to say, the manner of her first appearance as described in the part—was typical of Figlan—bizarre, cool, insolent, bored in the extreme. Pauline accomplished it to perfection. The leading man said something to her—she knew not what, but she recognized her cue when it came, and replied disdainfully in her pretty, lilting English. The second and the third speeches were passed without a break. Then Miss Nestor spoke to her from across the stage. It was unexpected; she had thought the whole scene was to be played with the leading man. It threw her out for a second, but she went on with scarcely a pause. Her heart was pounding so hard that it ached with a heavy physical pain, while the dampness that results from great agony of spirit came out on her lip and brow. She dug her nails into her palms to hide their shaking.

The lines ran along somehow, Pauline answering on her cues mechanically and never once dropping her character. Whatever else an actor may do or not do, he never forgets his character. She was playing the Norwegian. She might forget off stage; she would never do so on.

The leading man looked puzzled. She wondered what the trouble was.

"We've been taking a cross on that speech, Miss Figlan," Lawrence said. "Of course if you use another speech for that——"

"I'll make it on this one," she said, and instantly crossed in front of the leading man, who "took stage"—that is to say, moved with her, only in the opposite direction.

She had just begun her next speech, when he cried out:

"The cat! The cat! You're standing on the cat!"

Pauline jumped, then stood still in utter amazement. Had she taken leave of her senses or had he? She had distinctly heard him say that she was standing on the cat. Had, he said, "You're standing on the flowers," or the cabbage or anything that is supposed to be *placed* in the set—but a cat! She had never heard of a cat that could be set in one place on the stage and held there or even made to sit there during any specified scene. A look of mock horror was in the man's eyes. Lawrence came forward, laughing.

"That chalk mark is the sacred cat," he said.

Gossman roared. Everybody was laughing, but the leading man held his expression of mock horror.

"Oh!" gasped Pauline, moving off the mark.

"Didn't you have the rug on this side?" Lawrence asked, seeing her look of bewilderment.

"No, I——" she began faintly.

"Well, we can move it to the other side," he said.

"Oh, no," she interrupted. "Please don't move it. I—well, I wasn't used to it over here, but it's a little matter. I was startled by——"

"But for two years you've worked with it on the left," he insisted.

"Yes, move it," Gossman called out.

"May confuse her, being so used to it on the other side."

"No, please leave it here," Pauline protested. "Everybody has rehearsed six weeks with it here and——"

"They can get used to it on the other side," he put in.

"Please, really, I want it here," she pleaded.

"All right. Wherever she wants it, Lawrence," said Gossman.

Having settled on the proper place for the invisible cat, they went back to the rehearsal.

She hesitated. The leading man repeated his speech.

Little needles began prickling all over Pauline's body, things were going round. The incident had sent every line out of her mind as by magic. She put her hand to her head, a dazed expression coming into her eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

"Lawrence!" Gossman called out sharply. "Give Miss Figlan the script."

But Lawrence was already rushing toward her, manuscript in hand.

"When you've played a part so long," he said, "the lines are apt to get away from you like that, especially if you haven't thought of them for some time." All smiles, eager to please her, he put the manuscript of the play in her hands, even pointing out the place.

"The older Jefferson," Gossman put in pompously, "after playing *Rip Van Winkle* for ten years, couldn't remember the lines at all—had to carry a prompter who ran from side to side of the stage as Jefferson moved about on it."

Almost stunned though she was, Pauline realized that she was saved.

Saved!

She could have screamed aloud for the very joy of it! And with the mercurial temperament of the true artist, her spirits soared instantly. There was no future—just this all-glorious pres-

ent! Her somber eyes blazed in triumph. She had crossed the Alps in safety. Not a hitch! What matter the battles to come?

All her great present difficulties cleared away; she grew more assured and easy. The trained poise that belongs even to the stock actress, who must learn the no small task of appearing at ease under thousands of eyes, came to her aid. The heart of the woman being at rest, the art of the player came to the fore.

Lawrence was continually running to her, consulting her in a low voice about this bit of action or that.

"Is this the way you did it, Miss Figlan?" he would say. Or: "This is the way we do it, but of course if you prefer——"

And Pauline made a friend for Laura Figlan by telling him that she liked his methods very much. She had no suggestions for improvement as far as they had gone. He fairly beamed and looked out of the tail of his eye to see if Gossman had heard. From that time on, he never would listen to any of the derogatory stories about Miss Figlan.

How they all bowed down to her! She could realize it now. And as soon as she was out of the scene for a few minutes, she began to acquaint herself with the people as fellow players, instead of as relentless judges, arrayed against her, waiting to pronounce her doom.

They all seemed so nice—Gossman, Lawrence, the old ladies, the little ingénue, the maid, and the men of the cast. She cared less for her leading man than for any of the others. He appeared self-centered and fatuous. But Pauline was not in a critical frame of mind. The world was such a glorious place, and all the people in it were wonderful.

She did not bother to act. She now had complete possession of herself and realized that she was mistress of the

situation—the queen of this little group. Meanwhile, on Gossman's face was slowly growing a puzzled look. This gracious young person, with her somber eyes and yellow hair, who submitted so smilingly to every suggestion made by Lawrence or himself—and even to one or two made by the leading man—and looked with such friendly eyes at her fellow workers—surely this could not be the haughty, tyrannical woman who was so notoriously hard to manage! He could not make it out.

Then, suddenly, he understood. It was his attitude of unflinching good humor, and the advertising he had given her and the production, that had got under her skin. Well, if he couldn't manage her, nobody could. He heaved a deep sigh of self-complacency. There was no doubt about it—he was a diplomat. Many men would have blown up and lost the star; as it was—here she was in excellent temper!

Dotson came in just a few minutes before one o'clock. He was followed by Lieutenant Lewis. Pauline, off for a minute, noting the latter's splendid physique and fine, strong face, thought he must have been a leading man called to the colors.

Rehearsal over, Dotson and the tall stranger crossed the stage to where Pauline stood talking with Lawrence. Dotson paused a minute to speak to Miss Stacy, the pretty little maid in the play, who had not been well for over a week, but the stranger continued toward Pauline, an expectant smile on his face.

"Miss Figlan, you know Lieutenant Lewis?" said Lawrence.

"I'm very glad to know you, Lieutenant Lewis," replied Pauline, in the quaint English of the Norwegian, at the same time giving him her hand.

A surprised look came into the young lieutenant's face.

"Why, Lewis," cried Dotson, coming up at this point. "I thought you said you knew Miss Figlan!"

Pauline's heart stood still.

"I said *I* knew *her*," smiled Lewis. "I didn't say *she* knew *me*. I met you some years ago at a party, Miss Figlan." He turned to her. "It was a big affair, and of course you wouldn't recollect me; and equally of course, I wouldn't forget you."

She became suddenly conscious of the fact that he was still holding her hand. Confused, she withdrew it, and her eyes faltered. Dotson stepped in in his rather frivolous way.

"We came to ask you to feast at a dairy lunch with us, Miss Figlan," he said. "Our brave lieutenant has his car out front. What say?"

Pauline looked up at Lewis hesitatingly.

"Say yes," he pleaded smilingly.

"I was going to," she replied.

"There, now, Miss Figlan, you went and spoiled the act!" said Dotson, laughing. "He thought you were going to refuse me, and he would put up a plea that none could resist. Instantly you'd say: 'Sir, for your sake I will!' And you spoil it by saying, 'I was going to.'"

"I'm sorry," laughed Pauline.

After calling a two-thirty rehearsal, Lawrence left, followed by the actors in twos or alone, all smiling a gracious good-by to Pauline. Gossman said he would send the advertising man over to see her whenever it was convenient for her. Would that evening do? And would she excuse him now? With elaborate flattery and apologies for hurrying away, he got himself out.

And Pauline, Dotson, and Lewis went gayly through the battered old stage door down the narrow alley, laughing gayly—all gloriously young.

Miss Alice Nestor was the last one to leave the theater. She went with quick, swinging strides up Broadway and over to the Rehearsal Club on Forty-sixth Street.

The rooms were already crowded with chattering actor folk—mostly women. She was greeted, as she entered the short hallway, with questions about Miss Figlan's arrival, already announced in the papers.

"Is she very beautiful, Miss Nestor?" asked a little ingénue.

"Very beautiful," answered the old woman in her grim way.

"Is it true that she drinks so hard?" another asked.

"As she doesn't wear her morals on the outside," retorted Miss Nestor, "I am not in a position to answer you," and she went into the narrow serve-yourself room. Tray in hand, she soon made her way through a big, crowded back room to a smaller one. She was greeted with friendliness and familiarity on all sides. To none did she so much as give a smile. A curt nod, or "Hello, Mary!" or "How are you, Susan," and she passed on. Finding a little table in a far corner of the smaller room, she sat down with her back to the crowd.

Alice Nestor wanted to be alone to think out Laura Figlan's reason for not acknowledging at once that they were old acquaintances. For Miss Nestor and Miss Figlan—then Fay McMillan—had worked together down in Illinois, going into Chicago for their jobs before the grim old woman had fought her way to recognition by Broadway, and before the lovely Laura, many years younger, had found a wealthy Chicago packer who had taken her abroad and made of her a famous Norwegian star.

Of course, it was more than probable that Miss Figlan did not care to renew old acquaintance. She would not care to have it known that she had been born an American and had served her apprenticeship as a Chicago actress who could not get any kind of a New York hearing. Not that Alice Nestor would have told it. She had not even mentioned to others of the company that

she knew the star. She was glad now that she had not. How they would have smiled! Especially the men, old women that they were!

She had not expected Laura to fall on her neck—she had always been cold as a frog—or to exclaim: "Oh, yes, Miss Nestor and I used to do one-nighters down in Illinois together!" But it would have been easy to have said, "I know Miss Nestor. She used to be my character woman." Nobody would have been the wiser, or curious, for she, too, had been a well-known woman almost as many years as Figlan had. The star had, however, looked at her and through her and had said nothing whatever.

"It wasn't like Laura—that," Miss Nestor mused. "I would have thought her too shrewd for such bungling methods. As an acknowledged friend, I would have been more trustworthy. It's bad to make an enemy of somebody who knows too much about you."

She sat pondering as she drank her glass of milk and ate her sandwich.

"She has certainly changed somehow," the woman mused. "And yet she doesn't look one day older than she did fifteen years ago. But she's softer—or she's acquired that look with her accent. I don't know how she's done it. She always was dissipated. I guess the stories about her are pretty well founded."

The old lady finished her meager lunch and went upstairs to the reading room, there to enjoy her novel in the depths of a big, comfortable rocker.

She was right in a most thrilling moment of the story—the beautiful heroine, becomingly clothed in a lovely nightie that half concealed, half revealed her exquisite form, was running unexpectedly into the arms of the unsuspecting and defenseless hero—when suddenly she exclaimed aloud:

"By crackey! She really didn't know me!"

"By crackey," was Miss Nestor's oath and used only in extreme moments. Also, she was as much surprised at her exclamation as were the two or three women who had also come up to read. As a matter of fact, she had not even known that she was thinking of Laura Figlan.

The other readers looked up inquiringly, smiled, and went back to their books. Miss Nestor rose, and was soon walking down Broadway toward the Huron Theater.

"*Why didn't she know me?*" she mused. "I haven't changed since I used to do characters to her leads. I looked as old then as I do now—every bit. She'd recollect me all right if I ever mentioned Ben Lawson. I guess I'll put out a few feelers, some time when I have a chance, just to see how she'll take it. I'm not often curious, but when I am, I've got to sift it out and get to the bottom of it."

CHAPTER VII.

Pauline Stevens, sitting in a smart little café on Fifth Avenue, with Gossman's general manager and a young war hero hanging on her words, was tasting the sweet draft, so exhilarating and intoxicating, of being a star. She was beginning to look on life from a higher plane, to see folks more as they are than as they seem—all hero worshipers, more or less, and mostly made so by greed for money and more money. How these big managers toadied to her as Figlan! Not because the Norwegian was a great artist, but because she could bring great loads of money to them. And how mortally afraid they were of displeasing her, because of that—just as the little actor is afraid of displeasing the manager who pays his salary!

Happier than she had ever felt in her life before, Pauline took no thought of to-morrow, with its multitude of obstacles, and all the seven to-morrows

thereafter, until the opening of the play when she could come out and say:

"I am myself, Pauline Stevens—a success in my own right."

No doubt of her ability to play the part came to her. It would be difficult, of course—her first appearance in New York, with that "death watch," the first-nighters, out there—but she could do it! She could do it—if something didn't happen to prevent her going on! She would not think of that! She had to go on! But whether she would think of it or not, deep in her, unacknowledged, was the fear that Laura Figlan would learn that her name had not been withdrawn and would send some one to investigate. What if she should come herself? For though the English papers were so taken up with the war, they would most certainly not fail to take notice of the great Norwegian's American opening in her big London success.

"I suppose you don't know when you're sailing for France?" Pauline asked Lewis when the waiter brought the service.

"I'm back," he replied, "trying to do a little on this side to help out just now."

"And nursing his wounds," put in Dotson. And forthwith he proceeded to relate to her the young lieutenant's deeds of valor.

"Will you shut up, Dot?" commanded Lewis, a dark red staining his bronzed face. "You see, Miss Figlan, we went to Harvard together, and Dot——"

"Went astray in theatrics," put in Dotson. "But my brave friend here *stuck by me in my hour of shame!*" He rendered the last part of the sentence in the singsong of the old-time melodrama.

"And because of my sacrifice," returned Lewis, his gray eyes twinkling, "my friend Dotson feels it incumbent upon him to regale the world with my past, present, and future."

"I hope I am not the world?" said Pauline, laughing gayly.

"You are, I hope, going to be my friend," replied Lewis, smiling, but with an undercurrent of seriousness that somehow sent the warm blood over Pauline's pale face.

"This is getting mushy," broke in Dotson, whereat they laughed delightedly. Then he looked at his watch and motioned the head waiter. "Will you hurry things a little for us?" he asked. "We have a rehearsal at two-thirty."

"I'll take your order," said the waiter.

"What will you have to drink, child?" asked Dotson, addressing Pauline.

"Nothing, thank you."

"What?"

"I don't drink anything," she said with a quiet smile.

The two men could not resist looking at each other. Pauline, quickly intuitive, saw that exchange, understood it, and realized that she was taking upon herself something more than Laura Figlan's artistic fame. A slow color dyed her face, and she veiled her brooding



Pauline stood still, staring into the gray-green eyes of a strange woman.

eyes. She did not care so much for Dotson's opinion—she knew that his chief concern about her was the box office—but this young lieutenant who was an outsider to the profession, as she had already learned, he was thinking of her as—a drunkard perhaps!

The luncheon was served rapidly now. Dotson, keeping an eye on his watch, talked in his frivolous way, with an undercurrent of thought. He and Lewis were clearly close friends. A quiet had fallen on Pauline. Once she looked up from her salad and caught the lieutenant's eyes on her, and there

was a look in them that again sent the warm blood to her cheeks. She felt oddly resentful toward Laura Figlan.

"We've practically built the third-act set around that jade gown of yours, Miss Figlan," Dotson was saying.

Like a sudden blow out of the dark, the problem of wardrobe came to her. She had to have gowns! And she had no money! Nor would she have them charged, as no doubt she could, to Laura Figlan. What was to be done? Also, Miss Figlan would have notified them as to the colors she expected to wear in each act, so that the sets and costuming of the other women would not clash. The sets were all made; the women undoubtedly had their gowns—and she had not the faintest notion of what she should wear. Whether evening or street costume, she could of course learn from the script, but the colors! And it must be attended to at once. "Creations" were not made in a day or two. There were only six and a half days left. A jade gown, for one. What for the others? And how could one buy expensive gowns without money or credit!

"You can send your maid over to fix up your dressing room any time," Dotson went on. "We've redecorated it. You didn't say what color your cretonnes were, so we took a chance on ivory ground with tiny pink roses for the walls."

A maid! Of course. And cretonnes. She had some very cheap, faded ones that she had used to make the dingy road dressing rooms look a little brighter, but they would never do for Laura Figlan.

The men fell to talking war and transport ships and submarines and such, while Pauline, seeming to listen, struggled with the problem of clothes. To get beautiful clothes without money—how many women have moiled over that selfsame problem! With them, however, it was vanity. With Pauline

it was tragic necessity; but the underlying urge was the same—they were an aid to success!

"A Frenchwoman gave me the silver one," Lewis was saying to Dotson, who had remarked about several bangles the soldier was wearing on his bracelet. "It has been blessed. I wear them for the good wishes that go with them."

"It's curious," said Pauline, "that so masculine a business as war should have brought in so feminine a fashion as bracelets for men."

She would simply have to tell somehow. But how? She talked on, seemingly absorbed in the conversation, while her mind was fairly jumping in her effort to find a way out of her difficulty. Ah, she had it!

There was a lull in the conversation while they drank their coffee.

"It's fearfully frivolous to speak of clothes," Pauline said directly, "but they are rather important. My trunks didn't come with me."

"What?" cried Dotson in horror. "Your trunks not with you? Your wardrobe not here?"

"Every bit of it, both stage and street, left behind," she answered truthfully. She had indeed left her wardrobe behind at Mrs. Andrews'.

"Good God, girl! Why didn't you say so before?" Dotson was on his feet, a man for once in a panic over a woman's clothes. "Come on—we'll go right over to Revilles and order new gowns at once! Why, those trunks may not get here at all! We daren't wait to see!"

He motioned the waiter, paid him, and the three were soon on their way to Revilles.

Lewis thought of the past few months "over there," and how he had spent them, and smiled whimsically at himself trotting along with a lady to a gown shop.

Pauline caught his smile.

"This is a new rôle for you, is it not, lieutenant?" she said.

"Somewhat," he grinned. "Perhaps I'd better wait outside. I don't fit in, like Dotty here." He drew up in front of Rëville's.

Dotson ignored the slur, but Pauline said:

"No, come in."

How big and strong he was! He seemed somehow to help keep up her courage. What would he say if he knew? She felt an impulse to tell him, but she dared not.

Dotson introduced Miss Figlan and explained the circumstances to madam, who promised to have everything needed in plenty of time. She realized the importance. If mademoiselle would only give her an idea—

"Hadn't you better select as nearly the same as you had as possible?" Dotson asked Pauline. He turned to madam. "I could send over pictures of all Miss Figlan's gowns."

"That would be fine," replied madam. "We can reproduce them. And about colors?"

"A jade evening gown," said Pauline hesitatingly. She knew it was jade, but she was taking a chance on its being for evening. She looked at Dotson out of the corners of her somber eyes. Right. Madam wrote rapidly.

"A white." She recalled the picture. "Did you change?" asked Dotson quickly. "You wrote us a cerise, a black, and a royal blue for the other three acts. We'd figured on those colors. Of course if you prefer—" he hastened to add, so as not to appear critical. "But I think they would be more harmonious with what we've done."

"I'm afraid I did change." Pauline smiled apologetically. "But I'll change back. You tell madam."

"Thank you," he said to her; then, to madam, "A royal-blue velvet street gown, a cerise evening gown, a jade,

both very extreme, ultra-fashionable, then a simple black morning gown."

"Will Mademoiselle Figlan send over a gown that fits?"

"I can't," Pauline replied, smiling and blushing at the same time. She was wondering what this woman would say if she saw one of her cheap frocks. Even as it was, Pauline had seen her eyeing the suit she had on, which was very nice looking to eyes not too critical. "I have nothing but this little cheap thing that I wore over." She had worn it over from Mrs. Andrews' to the theater.

"Marie, come take mademoiselle's measure," called the Frenchwoman.

"Perhaps we had better go," suggested Lewis with a rueful smile.

"Oh, no," cried Madam Rëville. "It will only take one moment. Go, Marie. Take mademoiselle."

Pauline followed the girl into a little white-and-gold dressing room while madam entertained the two men.

Directly Pauline came out, and the men rose. Not a word was said about money.

"Please charge—" began Pauline.

"Of course," hastily broke in madam.

"It is my pleasure."

"To Mr. Henry Gossman," the girl finished boldly.

Dotson looked surprised, then laughed.

"Yes," he said. "Charge to us."

In Lewis' eyes a flicker of a smile came and went.

"As you say, monsieur," replied the woman, and they went out, Dotson chuckling to himself over what the Old Man would say when he found that the star had had over a thousand dollars' worth of gowns charged to him. For of course Dotson thought this simply her shrewd way of getting her gowns paid for, and had no idea that she meant to pay Gossman. Whatever the latter had to say, however, it would be to him, Dotson—not to her. He smiled

at thought of the great raking over in store for him.

Pauline felt again a song in her soul. Another problem solved! How they all scattered at a breath! Now there was only the part to be learned. She could do that easily. She had learned big parts often in the same length of time. Only she must work and work on the action of this one as she had never worked before.

She was laughing gayly at some frivolous remark of Dotson's when the car again stopped before the Huron Theater. She was an hour late, but—she was the star.

"Coming in, Lewis?" asked Dotson, as he helped Pauline out.

The soldier hesitated and looked at Pauline. Her brooding eyes were turned invitingly on him.

"Yes, I believe I will," he said.

And she felt an odd glow, as if it were a matter of great importance that he should have so decided.

CHAPTER VIII.

Pauline went about her work and daily life in a state of high tension. At rehearsals, which were now called morning, afternoon, and evening, she appeared cool, almost insolent. She continued to read her lines from the script, and no one questioned her right or reason for doing it. But in her rooms, all this indifference fell away, and she worked feverishly, incessantly. She had soon memorized the lines, but they must be so mechanical that they would come tripping along without effort or halt. Then the Norwegian's methods must be carefully thought out, every bit of business given in the script must be carefully practiced, and many recollected bits peculiar to the star put in.

Over and over, the girl raged through the big third-act climax, letting her voice out regardless of neighbors or the maid, Célèste, who had been secured by

calling up an employment agency. Célèste had worked for actresses before, however, and did not suspect that this actress was supposed to know her part already.

Lieutenant Lewis seemed always around. Of course he was with Dotson, but also he frequently asked Pauline to tête-à-tête luncheons and dinners. She was beginning to find him in her consciousness when she ought to have been studying, and she would catch herself wondering if he were not going to phone her.

He, on his side, was restless and nervous. Pauline's great, smoldering eyes were always before him, calling him. He resented it—tried to shake her off over and over again, only to end by seeking a telephone booth, or going around to the theater to see if she was there.

Dotson finally felt called on to protest.

"Don't make a fool of yourself, old man," he said. "I haven't a thing in the world against Figlan. I've found her fine. But she's had three husbands, and I doubt if she herself knows how many lovers."

"I know Laura Figlan's reputation," replied Lewis dryly. "And I'm no baby, Dot. Thank you for your good intentions."

"No, you don't thank me," replied Dotson. "You're furious at me, and I'm sorry for your sake—not mine. It's the worst possible sign."

"Look here, Dot," broke in Lewis. "You know as well as I do that I'm not game for her. She wouldn't give a fig for me, and I'm not such a dolt—"

"I don't know about that," interrupted Dotson. "You have a millionaire uncle."

"Who may marry himself and leave his money to wifey. No, I'm too much of a gambler for a shrewd business woman like the fair Laura." He spoke lightly, almost flippantly.

"She's playing you, certainly," said Dotson, troubled for his friend.

"Well—I know it." The young lieutenant smiled grimly. "And I'm enjoying the game, but I don't plan to propose, if that's what's worrying you."

"That, of course," said Dotson. "I'd far rather see you shot by the Germans than married to that girl—I mean woman. She seems like a girl, though. She really is wonderful. And I can see why men lose their heads over her."

"There's absolutely nothing about her that's coarse or vulgar," mused Lewis.

"But she's utterly without heart," replied Dotson. "They say she laughed when Jack Lord shot himself over her. Poor devil! I knew him. As fine a fellow as you ever saw."

"Let's talk of something else," said Lewis. "Do you hear from Rita?"

"No. And I don't want to. Poor girl, she would lie when the truth would serve better. I'm sorry for her. Honestly, I think it's an affliction."

"And that is to my mind the one unforgivable sin," said Lewis. "I can overlook most anything but deception—lies."

"You couldn't overlook—Jack Lord, could you, old man?"

"No! Of course not!"

They both were silent during the remainder of the drive.

"Here we are at your office. I'll leave you," said Lewis, stopping the car in front of Dotson's office.

"Figlan is coming up," put in Dotson dryly, "to look over some girls for that maid part. Miss Stacy is not going to be able to play it. The doctor said this morning she would have to go to the hospital at once."

"What's the trouble?"

"Appendicitis. Poor kid, I feel awfully sorry for her. After six weeks' rehearsal, too! It's a good thing for us, though, that the part is so small—only five lines."

"I believe I'll come up, after all,"

said Lewis. "Why all this fuss about selecting a girl if the part is so small?" he asked after a moment, showing that his mind was on the fact that Pauline was coming up to Dotson's office.

"Well, you see," grinned Dotson, "she must be pretty, as that is all there is to the part, but she mustn't be too pretty to suit the star. So, to be on the safe side, I asked said star to come up and help select her."

"Miss Figlan doesn't have to bother about the beauty of her cast," said Lewis, harking back to the subject as they took an elevator up to Dotson's office. "A woman would have to be a Venus to imperil her striking type."

Dotson looked at his friend quizzically, but did not smile, and they went up in silence.

"Besides," added Lewis, as they stepped out, "I don't believe she'd be guilty of petty jealousy."

Pauline, a few minutes later, justified his faith in her by choosing the prettiest girl in the room, and he carried her off in triumph to lunch.

Sitting under rose-colored lights, with no music to disturb them, Pauline and Lewis talked together in the subdued tones of dawning passion—before it is acknowledged or even recognized. Pauline forgot the fear that had grown in these last days, of Laura Figlan's appearing unexpectedly before the opening. Also, she forgot that other vague, gnawing fear that this man, out of the profession, knowing nothing of its deadly struggles and tragedies, might not condone the fraud she had practiced to get a hearing.

Lewis forgot everything but that she was here, soft, sweet, and alluring beyond compare, leaning across the table toward him in her pretty white blouse, her red lips slightly parted over gleaming teeth, her eyes ablaze.

"You're gloriously beautiful tonight!" he whispered, laying his hand over one of hers resting on the table.

The color flamed in her pale, creamy face, and she quickly veiled her glowing eyes. She could not have answered or looked up had she tried.

"Your picking that pretty, pathetic little girl in the office was fine. I liked the way you held up for her against Dotson. The great are so apt to forget the time when they were not—great."

"They should not—ever," whispered Pauline.

"You haven't forgotten, have you—Laura?"

It was the first time he had used her given name. Her heart pounded suffocatingly. He could see that her breath came heavily. His own voice was slightly thickened, and, oh, so low!

"No, I haven't forgotten," she breathed. "I don't think I ever shall."

The deep, passionate eyes, now lifted to his face, were pools of flame. He grasped her hand tightly and leaned over toward her without thought of other diners. There were just himself and this woman in the world.

"Oh, girl, I—" he began thickly—then broke off.

Her eyes were unveiled now, responsive, yielding, yet in no wise bold. For a moment his own held hers searchingly, then he looked down at his plate and gently removed his hand as if he needed it for his dinner.

His sudden change was like a slap in the face to Pauline. She felt shamed. She had let him see her very soul—and he had drawn back. They finished the meal hurriedly and almost silently.

After that he seemed to avoid her, and though her heart was heavy with hurt, she had little time to think of anything but rehearsals. They were at it continually now. A few minutes for eating, a few hours for sleeping, and rehearsals—that was what life was made up of.

On the night of the dress rehearsal, they were fifteen hours in the theater.

Sandwiches, beer, and ginger ale were brought in to them.

Meanwhile, these long hours and frequent rehearsals, which were giving the others of the company more practice in their parts, were giving Pauline less and less time to work out her part. She was in her rooms almost not at all, it seemed to her. The dress rehearsal showed her how really gorgeous was the production in which she was to make her bow to Broadway—and it made her afraid. She, a little stock actress, to presume so far! How had she dared? Her gowns were wonderful. Never had she hoped to wear such marvelous things.

Gossman, sitting out in the dark auditorium, watching that dress rehearsal, forgave her for charging them to him.

"By God, she's worth it!" he whispered to Dotson, who sat in front with him.

Neither of them heard her low-spoken lines. But that did not matter. They felt no misgivings.

At last the great night was at hand.

The company was in the theater at seven o'clock. Nervous, shaken, never growing hardened to a "first night," they came early so that nothing might go wrong.

Pauline's dressing room was heavy with the odor of great bunches of flowers, from Gossman and Dotson and Lawrence and Lewis. She bent over these last for an instant—long-stemmed American Beauties. Their perfume stifled her.

She began to make up feverishly. She was afraid of not being ready.

After what seemed but a minute, "half hour" was called, and a gradually increasing buzz from the great auditorium began penetrating to Pauline's dressing room. For no reason at all, she suddenly remembered the words of a little manager down in Wisconsin who had said, "What makes you think you can act?" A great splash of hot cosmetic went into her eye. She had to

call the nervous ingénue to remove it. Her maid had run out to get her a cold drink. With a make-up towel in shaking, ice-cold hands, the ingénue scraped in her eye; she jabbed, she scratched. The property man called "fifteen minutes" at the door so loudly that they both jumped. Pauline was quivering in every nerve when the ingénue left her. She was sick and faint. Her hands shook so that she could hardly finish "beading" her eyes. She made up her lips and wiped them off four times. She put on two "dimples," and took them off. The touch of her own cold hands shocked her body. They fluttered so that they tore her hair loose as fast as she pinned it into place. The maid returned. Pauline gulped the drink. It was said to contain a sedative, but she grew more nervous.

"Oh, Célèste," she cried in her agony, "I know I can never get through it! I feel as if I am dying!"

"You will get through," said Célèste. "I have seen many go through it who expect to die, but they have not! And next day come the grand criticisms, and all is forget."

"Overture" was called, and Célèste began fastening Pauline's gown.

"You have plenty of time, madam," she soothed. "Do not get excited."

"Oh, can you see the hooks all right, Célèste?" Pauline whispered.

There was a knock on her door.

"Miss Figlan," came the doorman's voice, "your sister is here to see you."

Pauline's heart seemed to stop completely. What new terror had fallen upon her in the midst of her agony!

"I had to tell him I was your sister, honey, or he wouldn't have let me in," a high-pitched voice cried. "I knew you'd be as dying to see me as I am to see you. I came right from the boat here as soon as I got out of the clutches of all kinds of officers who tried to take my clothes and make a spy of me and everything."

The receding doorman's shuffling steps clacked along the now quiet stage with a hollow sound.

Pauline stood paralyzed. It had come—the unexpected thing she had looked for! It had come on the night of nights, with all her cards on the table, while Hope and Horror were playing the game. Célèste waited for orders to open the door.

"Open up, darling," cried the voice a little peevishly. "I know it's a first night, but, heavens, don't we both know this old thing backwards?"

Pauline knew she had to open that door. She did so. And a small, dark woman flew at her and kissed her violently, then pushed her off to inspect her.

"I knew you'd be as crazy to see me as—as——"

Her voice faltered and died in her throat. An amazed light dawned in her face.

Pauline stood still, staring into the gray-green eyes of a strange woman.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE JUNE NUMBER.



The Ultimate Tears

By Hildegard Lavender

SHE was working in her garden, kneeling upon a pad and transferring silky, slender green seedlings from the basket by her side to their new homes in the mellow brown earth of the border. Her face, whenever she raised it, was seen pale in the morning light. There were grooves of pain about her mouth, and tears had channeled heavy valleys beneath her blue eyes.

Sometimes she paused, and seemed to forget the gentle, hopeful task that was hers. Her shoulders sagged; her gaze lingered long and unseeingly upon the ground. Then she would sigh, and go on with her transplanting.

He found her there. He came around the corner of the house from the front, swift, repentant, captivating. She raised her head at his approach.

"Good morning, Lotta," he began, and she answered, politely, a little sadly:

"Good morning, Guy."

"You're out early with your favorites, aren't you?" It was obvious that he temporized.

"Yes. I wanted to get them set before the sun was high."

"See here, Lotta, I was a brute. I'm awfully sorry. Forgive me."

"Of course. Don't think any more about it. I was very annoying myself."

"No, it was all my fault. I had no right to go to the affair. I knew that as well as you. I had a rotten time. I quit early, too, but I was too obstinate to come home. I went to the club and tossed about all night, wanting to come home to you, wanting to telephone you, but too damned proud to do it. But here I am, a thoroughly repentant husband. And we'll never quarrel any more, will we, darling?"

Her lips twisted into a wry little smile.

"We'll say so, anyway," she agreed.

"Poor kitten! You had a rotten night, too, didn't you? I can see it on your poor, white face. Never again, Lotta! Quarreling doesn't pay. Did you cry half the night away?"

She regarded him curiously, remotely. And she sighed again.

"No," she answered. "I didn't cry."

"Don't tell me that fib! I can see that you've been crying."

She arose, shaking the damp earth from her knees.

"I have been crying, Guy—that's true. But not last night. I've been crying a little this morning. And shall I tell you why? Because, when I waked, I realized that after a quarrel with you—such a quarrel, Guy dear!—I had gone calmly to bed and to sleep. I had not wept or wailed; I had not eaten my heart out waiting for you to come back. And so I cried, this morning. Because I saw that all our lovely, stormy days of love and jealousy and anger and forgiveness were over. You could leave me with bitter words upon your lips, and I could go to sleep! And so I cried, for the beautiful thing that we have killed between us, for the beautiful love that used to break its heart over separation and misunderstanding. Those are the tears you see upon my face. The final ones, Guy. I'm sorry. Shall we go in to breakfast?"

She pulled off her garden gloves and dropped them into her basket, and then she smiled at him the patient, disillusioned smile that is saltier than tears. And they moved into the little house that had been built to shelter love and would henceforth shelter only habit.

On Confessing "All"

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "How Often Can One Love?" "Intimacy and Allure," etc.

Shall she, or shall she not? It is a delicate question, and yet in these days, with their fast changing order of things, it is a very live one—for every woman, for every girl.

[T is a rather pathetic letter:
"I was so young. I had no mother." She does not know that she is quoting Browning when she says that. And then: "It happened so long ago. There was no one else who knew. And of course *he* has forgotten."

Time was when the answer to her would have been unqualified horror and rebuke. Time was when she would have been called a Magdalen, and would have been pointed the grim, forbidding path to the Home for Wayward Girls. An earlier time yet, and the nunnery would have been her only shelter. If she had been a great lady who had erred through loving unwisely, she might eventually have become an abbess, like Guinevere. If she had been a pretty little peasant maid, she would have been a lay sister, and she might have washed her heart pure with swabbing up the convent stairs. Kind-hearted Oliver Goldsmith, for all his kind-heartedness, would have consigned her to an even more drastic punishment. "The only art her guilt to cover," he proclaims, "to hide her shame from every eye, to bring repentance to her lover and wring his bosom, is to die."

And here is a young woman—she says she is twenty-eight—who is actually asking advice as to whether a strict sense of honor and a due measure of prudence require that she tell the man whom she wishes to marry that she has had a previous love affair of a questionable and torrential nature!

Times have changed indeed! Appar-

ently it has not occurred to her to view herself as a lost soul during the six years that have elapsed since her great experience. She doesn't seem aware that she would have been regarded as a "Magdalen" by all the best morality of the early-Victorian period. She has, apparently, pursued an even, self-respecting way as the bookkeeper for a wholesale lumber firm, and has never suffered the self-abasement of regarding herself as kin to the preying sisterhood. Whatever grief she had at the conclusion of her affair she seems to have kept decorously to herself, and to have gone on with her life in as seemly a way as possible. She has not regarded it as any one's business to know that intimate and scorching chapter of her history.

But now she has fallen in love, and a man has fallen in love with her, and she wants to know whether she should open her story at that old forgotten page and hand it to him to read. Very thoroughly has the old tradition been smashed. It even seems that the later tradition is toppling—the tradition born in daring, modern fiction that attempts to show life more or less as it is; the tradition that it is possible for a woman who has "erred" to live the normal life of women provided she throws herself upon the mercy of the man, leaving it with him to act as her judge and executioner, or her judge and savior, as seems good to him.

In "Karen," which was played last winter in that home of social experiment

in the city of New York—Greenwich Village—this point of view was presented. *Karen* was, to be sure, a young Swedish woman, which, to a certain extent, spared the feelings of young American women of Anglo-Saxon upbringing. She was a member of what we are beginning to call quite universally "the intelligentsia." She had lived in that stronghold of casual relationships, Paris, for a while in her earlier youth, doing translations in a publishing house and maintaining an irregular relation with a young Swedish sculptor.

But the young Swedish sculptor had been as disloyal to the irregular relation as he could possibly have been to one entered upon with all the benefit of clergy, and *Karen* had withdrawn from it. Later, she had returned to her home, in which a deeply understanding mother and a finely stern, puritanic father are the chief characters. A man, a physician, falls in love with her. He is a widower who makes no pretense of not having loved his dead wife, but who does not find in that love any bar to a fresh affection for *Karen*. He asks her to marry him, and *Karen* follows what might be called the semimodern tradition and accepts him conditionally, the condition being that he wishes to persevere in his suit after he knows of the Paris episode.

He most emphatically does not wish to. He reads her a fiery lecture and withdraws in outraged morality from the house. And *Karen* goes back to Paris, to her translation at the publishing house and to her reflections upon the advisability of confessing "all." If she was the mature and level-headed woman she seemed to be, she undoubtedly rejoiced that she had escaped marriage with such a cad as the Swedish physician had shown himself in their parting conversation. But, being a mature and level-headed woman, she must have been quite well aware that she did not want any more irregular re-

lations. The bubble of sex freedom had been definitely broken for her. She wanted marriage, companionship, home, children, settlement—the quiet, orderly life in which adults, at any rate, are both happiest and most productive.

Would *Karen* ever again subject her admiration and affection for a man to the test to which she subjected the Swedish physician? Would she ever again risk seeing the Eastern pasha, brutal, cold, possessive, take possession of a kindly seeming gentleman? Winning another man's love, would she ever dare to put it to such a strain as that to which she put his? Probably not. And yet, being essentially an honest woman and reared in the semimodern tradition, she would probably never marry a man without giving him the chance to withdraw from his suit in case he did not care for a wife who had been another man's mistress.

Is it conceivable, however, that the world is entering upon a more tolerant, or, if one pleases, a more lax period, and that the woman who has "lived her own life," as it is euphemistically put, will no more think of retailing her past love history to her suitor than he, on his part, thinks now of reciting his to her? Is it conceivable that the time will come when she will reason thus:

"I am the sum, or the multiple, of all my experiences. I am what they, good and bad, have made me. Lacking some of them, I might—it is quite conceivable—have been something very much better, higher, finer. But I should not have been what I am, and it is what I am, the very woman which I have become, that he wants to marry.

"If I begin to make a detailed report on my past, why shall I single out that particular summer in Switzerland above all others? If I begin the detailed report, should I not include the fact that, from the age of seven to that of ten, I was an arrant little thief, and used to extract the pennies from my mother's

purse whenever she left it unguarded? But I am not a thief now, and if that episode stood out unduly in his recollection, filled him with forebodings about the honesty of our possible progeny, would I not have done a wrong?

"Shall I tell him that I once raised my croquet mallet, in a moment of rage, and struck my antagonist in the game over the forehead, and that only the mercy of Heaven and my bad aim preserved me from murder? Shall I tell him that, at eleven, I sneaked into the dining room after a dinner party and drank the heel taps in all the wine glasses? It made me particularly ill and a confirmed teetotaler, but he might be stricken with a dread of dipsomania for me.

"In short, why should I single out one irregularity out of the past which has made me what I am—the woman he loves and desires for his mate—and offer him only that one piece of information about myself?"

Of course, the woman who would have reasoned in that fashion yesterday would be a bit of a casuist. For yesterday, even this morning, let the feminists rant as they will, the old idea of the wife as property had not disappeared from all the statutes, or from many societies. And as long as it prevailed, as long as that old tradition of her being a chattel existed, even in the most refined form, a man might be retroactively injured, so to speak, by the fact that another person had had possession of his property. The child who abstracted pennies from her mother's purse, or who drank the dregs in the glasses after the dinner party, robbed him, the husband, of nothing. But the woman who gave herself to a lover robbed him, the husband, prospectively, but definitely, of something that was his—his property. Transmuted by sentiment and refinement into whatever grace of language is possible, the idea of ownership is at the base of the retro-

active horror and jealousy with which men regard any former love experience on the part of the women they marry. Women have the feeling, also, but generations of being forced to hold their peace, to accept gratefully and without question what is offered them, have trained them to bite their lips hard upon all the bitterness of spirit they would fain pour out upon the husband who lightly confesses to premarital affairs.

But in the new time which is marching on apace—which is, perhaps, already here—the property idea of either woman or man in marriage is apparently doomed to disappear. In a world intoxicated by the idea of personal freedom, even the most subtle and sentimental slaveries are to be done away. Men and women will marry out of love, will be equal partners in the relation, and will utterly repudiate the notion of proprietorship. Will a woman, in that swift-coming tomorrow, be justified in reasoning that she need not, in honesty and fair dealing, reveal to a man before she marries him any previous love affair she may have had? Is the girl whose query starts this paper—and who, after all, lives in a world so changed from that of her mother and her grandmother that the same code no longer applies to her as to them—is she justified in toying with the notion of concealing that episode that happened "so long ago?"

Well, what did the episode really represent in her life? Is it actually dead and done for? Has she a whole heart to offer this man who has come a-wooing? Is the crack so well cemented that it will never gape, never fail to hold the full meed of love and affection, of passion and duty, which marriage demands, and lacking which it must be a failure? It is quite possible that her heart has been mended so that it is a perfectly good vessel for the daily sacrifice and sacrament of marriage. But if that hidden past represents

something with power to thrill her still in recollection, if it has left her less rich in gifts for the new lover, then surely it is her plain duty to let him know what it is she brings to the altar. He has, in short, an absolute right to know what he is getting and to decide whether or not it is the thing he wants.

But suppose she knows that the closed chapter is truly closed for her; suppose she knows that the experience which was hers six years ago has left her neither hard nor bitter, but wise and humble and grateful to her new love, and to time with its gift of healing; suppose she knows that, as far as all actualities are concerned, she has more to give her husband than she could have had, lacking that experience—then she has to consider the matter wholly from the point of view of practicality.

Is he an old-fashioned man, idealizing woman, idealizing marriage? Will it be an unbearable shock to his idealism to hear the story she has to tell, just as it is sometimes an unbearable shock to a child's idealism to learn the facts of life? There are such men in the world, and they are not always the dreamers and poets, either. A woman who loved such a one would be willing to bear a very heavy weight of secret knowledge rather than dim that bright belief.

There is this, also, to remember. In the first flush and fervor of love, a man might be able to accept such a circumstance as that which the girl relates. He might, to use the old-fashioned terminology, be able to "forgive" the former affair. But when the day of first passion, with its desire for sacrifice, with its miraculous generousities, was past, he might find that there was a canker at his heart. The knowledge that his wife had "belonged" to another man, secretly, illicitly, might change the very nature of his being, might prove a cor-

rosive chemical thrown among the kindly currents of his blood. The woman who confesses "all" must take that risk.

The new order of things is throwing men and women together in a way which our grandparents could not have conceived. They work together in offices, shops, and factories. There is no chaperonage for them. Youth and attraction run high among them, and at the most impressionable age, they are practically free of the restraints of a supervising society. It is inevitable that situations should arise the sequel of which will be the very problem which confronts the girl who was so young and had no mother. It is inevitable that girls of the respectable classes, girls to whom a mercenary relationship with any man would be unthinkable, should sometimes have brief, flaming, not altogether unworthy "affairs." Are they all to go ashamed and unwed all the remainder of their lives because of these? Are they to try to adopt the old-fashioned view of life and feel themselves lost to the possibility of homes and settled happiness? Or are they to feel that the homes and the settled happiness can be theirs only upon the magnanimous whim, the chivalrous caprice, of the man who wants to marry them?

It is a delicate question. But one thing is sure. If every girl could but realize, when nature and youth and longing are most unruly within her, that the day will surely come when she will ache to show the whole book of her life to some man's eyes, knowing that there is nothing there to hurt his pride or his faith or his love—if she could but realize this, there would be few such pathetic little letters as the one quoted at the beginning of this paper, and the formal chaperonage of formal society would never be missed.

FOR WINIFRED Stella M. During



ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

A story of love and adventure by a writer who knows life, men and women, and human nature the world over.

WINIFRED, one moment! Can't you give me just one moment?"

"Oh, Bob, I can't stay *now*!" Was it his fancy, or did a little gleam of fright light up for an instant the soft beauty of her blue eyes. "I have so much to see to—you know I have!"

He sighed a little. How sweet she looked in her soft white dress, with a little knot of holly in her fair hair and a tiny plaster robin from a bonbon perched most realistically upon her shoulder! Thornton had put it there—Thornton, who had sat next her at supper and had had just enough champagne to make him bold enough to do it. Bob's mouth had set a little grimly as he had watched.

"But supper is over, and every one is enjoying himself. No hostess has any duties to speak of after supper," he protested.

But still Winifred drew away.

"I can't stop now," she said with decision, and he sighed and let her go. Would things have been different, he asked himself afterward, if he had been a little less sensitive, a little less humble, a little less doubtful of his own deserts? If he had held her fast and made her listen?

For this gay little impromptu dance at the manor might well be his last chance. If he did not seize or make an opportunity to speak now, he might

never have another. To-morrow was Christmas Day, and he must spend it with his mother. The day after, both he and Thornton were going back to that dreadful strip of shell-shattered, broken ground where the opposing armies of a whole world stood grimly blocking each other's way.

And Winifred Fane knew it, and yet she eluded him, held him off with both hands, refused—with what looked almost like fear in her eyes—to listen to what she must know he longed to say. With a sense of cold that almost touched numbness, the certainty swept over him that she did not want to hear. Forgetting both the dearth of dancing men in the drawing-room and his duty to his hostess, even though that hostess were Winifred herself, Okenshaw threw himself into the corner of the big wooden settle by the fire in the hall and sat very, very still.

How long he sat there he did not know. A little rush of footsteps roused him. There was a big bunch of mistletoe tied under the electrolier in the middle of the hall, and the footsteps came no farther. He heard a laugh—a man's laugh, gay and triumphant—a whispered "I may?" the sound of a breaking twig, and he crouched lower in his corner. Who claimed the ancient privileges of the mistletoe on Christmas Eve was no concern of his. Then came a whisper from a woman's

lips, soft and sweet and all shaken with feeling, "Hughie, oh, Hughie!"

It brought him to his feet, tense and straight and still. As he stood, his eyes were just above the old settle's high oaken back. And there lay Winifred in Thornton's arms, her fair head pillowed on his shoulder, her lips meeting his in all the abandonment of a girl's first great love. For a moment Okenshaw stood frozen. Then he sat down again noiselessly, crossed his arms on his knee, and hid his eyes upon his khaki sleeve.

It was Thornton, then—Thornton, with his charming smile and his easy conscience; Thornton, whom all men liked and few respected. Women liked him, too, responding all too quickly to the charming love-making at which he was such an adept, but somehow Okenshaw had not expected Winifred Fane to be amongst them. She was clearer-eyed, deeper-souled than most women. He would hardly have thought it possible that Thornton, with his amorous eyes and loose lips— He checked himself almost with a groan. Thornton was his friend.

The evening wore on. The Christmas bells clashed out from the old tower of the village church, and every one trooped to the door to hear them. Bob found himself out on the steps, with a little crowd of men and girls about him and Winifred by his side. She lifted her eyes to him, and her face shone in the starlight, pale and pure. Did her look hold a touch of appeal, almost of apology? Bob took her hand and held it, and his own was icy cold. If he had been less diffident! If he had had a charming smile and an easy conscience! If he had rushed things as Thornton must have rushed them this Christmas time, for a month ago, he had had, Bob knew, no thought of Winifred in his mind! He checked his bitter thoughts. What did it matter? Winifred had given herself in that long,

long kiss, and nothing that Bob could have said or done would have stayed her.

"Am I to—congratulate you?" he asked softly.

She started a little at his words.

"How did you know?" she whispered.

"I was in the hall, and I saw. Dear, I couldn't help it—and it doesn't matter. He would have told me, anyhow. Oh, Winifred, I *hope* you will be happy!"

His voice roughened and broke. That was the thing, the one thing, the only thing that mattered. The girl slipped two light hands about his arm and leaned her forehead against it just a moment in the clear, cold dark. Had he not been to her almost a brother ever since the time when she had worn pinafores and a pigtail?

"Oh, Bob, I *am*! So happy and so frightened! I can't bear to think about what you are both going to—so soon! Oh, Bob, you're so much graver and cooler and—and less reckless than he is! You will look after him? You will bring him safely back to me?"

"I'll bring him back," he said hoarsely. "Don't be afraid, dear. I'll do my best for him—and you. If it's humanly possible—I'll bring him back."

It was very hot at Sainte Hilaire, hot and dusty and still. The poplar leaves hung listless, showing their silver undersides when a little breeze blew fitfully a moment and sighed and died away. The hillside rose behind the little town, all neatly patterned out in little squares of various greens—barley and oats, clover and lucerne. A yellow dog lay in the stone doorway of the inn that stood, dark and cool and ancient, with its creaking sign and its wooden benches, at the end of the village street. He snapped lazily every now and then at a too persistent fly, and he was the only thing that moved under the hot blue sky except the swal-



It brought him to his feet, tense and straight and still. For a moment he stood frozen.

lows and the roses that nodded over the old gray wall of Gran'mère Bordée's garden. Anything quieter and more peaceful than Sainte Hilaire that summer's afternoon would have been hard to find.

But from the northeast came a never-ceasing mutter and grumble, and every now and then a dull thud that sent a thrill along the solid earth under one's feet and shook the small square windows of the Lion D'Or, in spite of their thick greenish glass and heavy oaken frames. For out to the northeast and only a few miles away, there were no silvery poplars, no little fields of oats and barley and wheat waving in the wind, no leaf or blade of grass or human habitation, nothing but the churned soil tossed up in hideous disorder and only half hiding the horrors that War, beastly, blatant, brutal War, had left upon his trail. Sainte Hilaire, sleeping in the hot sunshine beside its little river, seemed the more poignantly peaceful for what was happening on that belt of horror only five miles away.

Suddenly there came the sound of many footsteps. The head of a column of poilus, all hung about with miscellaneous and wonderful equipment till they looked like the man of many instruments who wandered from fair to fair in the days of our youth, swung into view below the village. They clattered up to the inn door, filled the benches, flung themselves upon the warm yellow gravel, sat arow like peas in a pod against the gray-stone walls of the Lion D'Or, and woke up Sainte Hilaire.

Old Madame Bordée, who kept the Lion D'Or, came hurrying out of its cool dimness, a blue handkerchief, spotted big with white, tied over her silver hair. Julie and Mariette, her two elderly maids, left their washing in a snowy pile on the river bank and ran to help her. Beer, wine, a basket

of soft honey pears, just ripe and two sous for five, went rapidly from hand to hand. But serve as fast as Gran'mère Bordée would, she could not serve fast enough for the hot and thirsty boys. Further help was imperative.

"Fifine!" she called shrilly.

Out of the cool, dark shadows of the inn came a girl. Her short skirt was of blue; across the whiteness of her bodice was laced the black velvet corselet of her native Alsace; and from the dusky cloud of her hair to the soles of her stout, country-made shoes, she was exquisite to look upon. She stood a moment, a slim, erect, vivid little figure, with smiling eyes and pouting lips. There was a shout at sight of her, for many of the lads were her friends—a shout that deepened the carmine on her cheeks and lit a smoldering fire in her eyes. A young Englishman, pushing a heavy motor bike up the gravel to the inn door, stopped short.

"Jove!" he said. "What a beauty!"

But she took no notice of him as she moved lightly about, busily helping Julie and Mariette to serve. One bench, the young Englishman noticed, she never went near, a bench on which sat a handsome, bronzed boy, who could not even drink his half liter of red wine for watching her. But in spite of her caution, her duties carried her once just a little too near him. He threw a powerful arm about her and pulled her on to his knee.

Instantly she released herself, and a slim brown hand caught the too daring one a shrewd and stinging blow across his cheek.

"*Cochon!*" she hissed at him, and her dusky eyes blazed.

"Br-r-r!" said Gran'mère Bordée, and shook her head at naughty Fifine. For if any one may put an arm about a girl, it is surely the man she is to marry.

A youngster sitting below the gar-

den wall stood up, opened a penknife, and surreptitiously severed one of the red roses nodding over the top, though Gran'mère Bordée's roses were sacred, and he knew it. Gran'mère Bordée saw him.

"*Pierre*," she screamed, "*fi donc!*" and Pierre, shamefaced, dropped the red rose in the grass and sat down again.

Thornton leaned his motor cycle against the inn wall, walked over to where Pierre sat, and picked up the rose.

"*Moi!*" he said in his stiff British French. "*J'ai ash-tay!*" and he gave Gran'mère Bordée a franc. Then he turned to Fifi and, with his best bow, presented the rose.

"*Vive la France!*" was all he said, but whole volumes lay in his laughing glance.

"*Roo Britannière!*" returned Fifi, teeth and eyes both flashing, and the two shook hands.

Gran'mère Bordée shrugged a little, though her shrewd old eyes gleamed. If the Englishman chose to pay a franc for a rose worth five sous, that was his look-out; the English had money to burn. But he had better not have given it to Fifi with Matthieu there to see.

The summer wore on, the long, dreadful, disappointing summer of 1915, when it seemed that all the British bulldog could do was to hold on, and sometimes he was hard pressed to do even that. August was half over when, late one afternoon, Lieutenant Thornton stumbled down the steps of the dug-out just behind the firing line, where had been passed all the safe moments of his life for the last five days. His eyes were glassy with strain and want of sleep, his weary legs bent under him with fatigue, but instead of rolling into the bunk that yawned invitingly for him, he set about changing his trench boots for a lighter pair and took out

pocket comb and mirror. The M. O. eyed him doubtfully.

"Look here! You turn in," he said. "Sleep's what you want, my lad. Just you lie down and get it."

"I can't—not here." Thornton's voice was thick and uncertain. "I'm going—where it's fresh and green—and quiet. I've got to have a change. I've got to get away from—all this. I'll be able to sleep, perhaps, at Sainte Hilaire. It's Paradise, after this."

"Angel and all," said a sub with a grin.

"Now then, idiot!" remonstrated the M. O., for Thornton was in no condition for chaff.

He dragged himself up the ladder and went, half blindly, in search of his motor bike. He had twenty-four hours off duty and he meant to make the most of it. Bob Okenshaw watched him go. Bob had got his captaincy only the week before, but already it had added to his sense of responsibility for Thornton.

"Where does he go to, at Sainte Hilaire?" he asked.

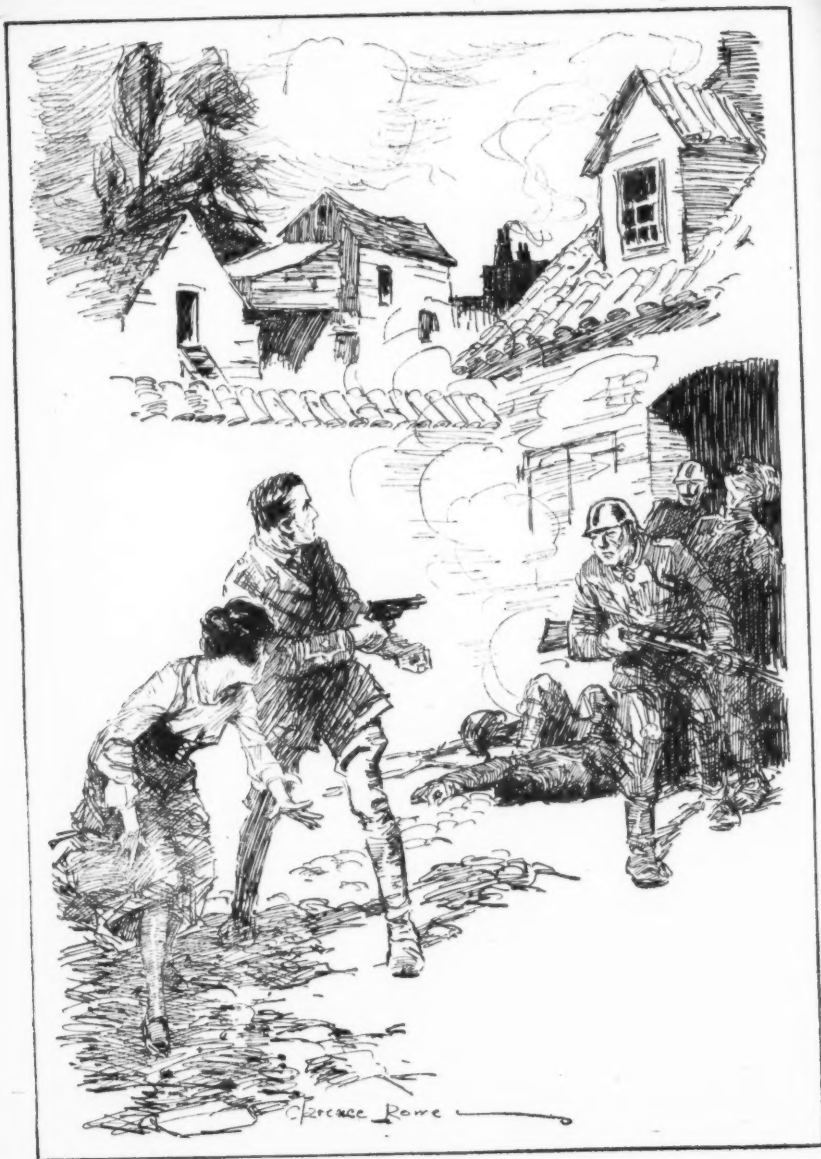
"The Lion D'Or. There's a girl there—a regular village Carmen, all ice and fire—prettiest little wench for miles around. All the men are wild about her—and Thornton's the worst. You don't mean to say that you, his friend and more than brother, didn't know!"

"No," said Okenshaw slowly. "I didn't know."

"I'll do my best for him—and you."

The words of his own promise seemed always before him as he trudged the weary miles to Sainte Hilaire that hot afternoon. If he were to keep that promise, if it were to mean anything at all, he must put all sensitive shrinking on one side—and interfere.

Gran'mère Bordée was sitting in her dark, cool bar with its sanded floor,



He had only a five-chambered revolver, but every cartridge dropped a man.

its wooden tables, and its marvelous array of various colored bottles, when he walked into the Lion D'Or.

"Lieutenant Thornton," he said, saluting the old lady with punctilious courtesy, "is wanted. Is he here?"

Gran'mère Bordée pointed along a dim, tunnelloike passage with a shimmer of roses and a blaze of sunshine at the end. It led into a garden, and there on a rustic bench sat Thornton—with Fifiine at his feet. An English lesson was evidently in process. The difficult and unfamiliar syllables fell haltingly from her pretty lips.

"Hee-oo, I lov you. I vill marrai— Oh!" and the girl broke into a flood of rapid and rapturous French, not one quarter of which could Thornton understand. But he understood the adoration in her lambent eyes, the thrill of feeling, ardent and pure and deep, in her voice, the passionate yielding of her lithe young body to the pressure of his arm. Stopping, he gathered her closely to him, looked up—and saw Okenshaw.

"Hullo!" he said a little thickly, rising with Fifiine still held lightly in the circle of his arm. And then, "Don't you know this garden is private?"

With a little gesture of his hand, Bob brushed the superfluities aside.

"I want to speak to you," was all he said.

"Then speak! Anything you have to say you can say here."

But Bob shook his head.

"Come out," he said curtly. And Thornton came and Fifiine followed him.

"Thornton, are you mad?"

The words leaped at him. Before the Lion D'Or, the stretch of gravel lay hot and golden and deserted. No one that Bob could see was there to hear. Thornton raised his head, and his eyes, bloodshot for want of sleep, met Okenshaw's steadily.

"No," he said, "I never was saner.

I have found a woman I can love with all my soul—and I'm going to marry her."

"Marry her! You can't! What about Winifred?"

A sudden contempt silenced him—contempt for the man for whom the lips that were nearest were always the most potent, their appeal too strong for faith, for honor, even for so poor a thing as remembrance. Yet Winifred loved him! He had promised to bring him back to her—if he could. He would do his best, his very best.

"No decent man can pledge himself to two women," he reminded him almost fiercely. "Winifred—"

"Winifred!" echoed Thornton, with the sudden passion of an overwrought boy. "What has Winifred to do with you?"

Okenshaw hesitated a painful moment.

"Thornton," he said at last, in desperate appeal, "you're going to behave decently. I'm going to see that you do."

"I'll behave as I damned well please!" returned Thornton violently, and flung off through the dim coolness of the inn out into the sunny garden.

But Fifiine was not there. Fifiine was waiting for Bob Okenshaw at the corner of the gray garden wall. He started at sight of her, a tense little figure, her dark eyes burning in her white face, her hands pressed hard over her beating heart. Not all the rapid English had been intelligible as she had stood listening under the open window of the dark, cool bar, but she had understood enough.

"Tell me," she demanded impatiently, "is this that you say true? There is, in England, another woman?"

"Yes," agreed Bob steadily. His French, like Thornton's, was stiff and unyielding, but he had sufficient for his task. "There is, in England, another woman."

"And—he cannot marry me?"

"No. He cannot, in honor, marry you."

Fifine said no more. She just stood and stared at him, all the vivid, beautiful life dying out of her, still and cold as stone. Okenshaw trudged doggedly back whence he had come. It was for Winifred. He had done his best with Thornton, and failed. It might be that with Fifine he had not failed.

He had not. Fate will sometimes give an odd twist to the results of a man's actions. Fate saw to it, now, that what he had done should be the best, the very best, for Winifred.

The moment of immobility passed. Slowly Fifine realized that she could not stand there forever. There was nothing for her to do but go back through a world that had turned to dust and ashes about her, back to the man who had fooled and betrayed her. There was, in England, another woman. Never, never could he marry her!

A sudden wave of anger swept over her. She flew up the garden, a small feminine tornado of fury. On the rustic bench lay Thornton, his arm hanging limply over the end, his head dropped helpless against its gnarled and comfortless back, asleep. Fifine looked down at him, her heart on fire with hurt pride and wounded feeling, with the anger that can injure and the jealousy that can kill. But beneath it all lay pity. He looked so white and worn and weary. She could not wake him, even to hear all that she had to say. Instead, she tiptoed softly away and went and stood in the inn door.

How long she stood there she never knew. Time passed in a trance of pain. A sound roused her, the sound of a rapidly oncoming car. It stopped at the inn door, and three English soldiers sprang out. Two went into the inn, evidently in search of stragglers. The third turned to Fifine.

"I should advise you to seek safety, mademoiselle. The Germans are close at hand," he said.

Fifine thanked him listlessly. She had been told so often that they were coming that the news had lost both terror and meaning. For they never came. The soldiers came out of the inn, and all three got into the car and drove off. And Fifine had said never a word of Lieutenant Thornton sleeping the sleep of exhaustion in the garden.

Then came the sound of marching feet, and the head of a column of poilus swung suddenly into view. As they passed, one of them broke away and ran up to the inn door. It was Matthieu.

"*Les Boches!*" he said breathlessly. "You will seek safety? Oh, Fifine, for my sake!"

Fifine's heart beat fast as he ran on. Was it, then, true? Upstairs she could hear Gran'mère Bordée dragging boxes about and opening cupboards.

"Fifine!" she called shrilly. "Fifine!" But Fifine never moved.

In the little wood on the hill, half a mile off, had been long prepared cunning shelters, to which in time of danger all in Sainte Hilaire might betake themselves and hide. But before Fifine sought safety there, she must wake the exhausted sleeper lying in the garden. She never moved. It was not pity that stayed her this time, but her smoldering sense of injury and woe and passionate, ever-deepening anger. She would not wake him; he should take his chance. But she could not leave him. So Gran'mère Bordée upstairs shrieked, "Fifine! Fifine!" in vain.

Then came the gleam of steel above the bend of the bushes by the lane. A rattle of accouterments, a guttural laugh—and a small troupe of uhlans clattered into view. Now indeed Fifine ran, but quick as she was, the uhlans



"Cochon!" she hissed at him, and her dusky eyes blazed.

were quicker. One of them caught her in the long passage before ever she could reach the garden.

Her cry brought Thornton to his feet. He stood a moment staggering like a drunken man; then with a shout he ran to her help, snatched her out of the German's brutal hold, flung her behind him, and shot.

He had only a five-chambered revolver, but every cartridge dropped a man. Then another revolver spoke from inside the dim passage. With a

little sobbing sigh, Thornton pitched forward on his face.

"Leave him, the swine!" barked the officer in command. "Fire the village and come on! We haven't time for women now."

They fired the village thoroughly and systematically. In a few minutes, the reek of it was going up to heaven. The curé's little house by the church, with its green shutters and wooden roof, caught first. Then cottage after cottage burst into black smoke and laugh-

ing red tongues of flame. But the Lion D'Or was solidly built of cold gray stone and oak. It was not easy to burn that. Before long the houseless villagers were gathered, a smoke-blackened, sobbing crowd, under the one roof left them. The good curé was doing his best to give them what comfort was possible when Fifine appeared in the doorway.

"*Mon père,*" she said, and beckoned. The curé glanced once at her white, set face and followed her.

On a couch in an inner room lay Thornton, his life ebbing fast away. But he could still speak.

"I wish—to marry her," he said. "I love her with all my heart and soul, and I would leave her provided for."

The curé glanced only once at Thornton and raised his hand. If Fifine were indeed to be married to her English lover, there must be no delay. But Fifine drew back.

"No," she said, in dull, despairing denial. "I am not worthy. It is I who have killed him—I alone. If I had believed in him, if I had trusted him, if I had called him at first—when the English soldiers came—while there was yet time!"

"*P'tite,* he wishes it, and he is dying," said the curé gravely.

Weakly Hugh held out his arms.

"Fifine," he whispered, "I love you. It was always you—only you!"

Once again it was Christmas time, and Bob Okenshaw was home; and this time for good, for a shell had carried away one leg below the knee, and he would never fight again. The village made much of him, for he had won the D. S. O. And amongst his friends was no one more sympathetic, more appreciative, more admiring than Winifred, a faint, pale, shadowy Winifred, robed in deepest black, mourning as a widow though she had never been

a wife, breaking her heart for the man who had forgotten her.

"Tell me," she would say, "more about him. You were with him every day. You knew him better than any one. You saw him just before he was killed. And you loved him, didn't you?"

"Yes," agreed Bob heavily, "I did. I think we all did!" and he told her once again of Hugh's gayety and charm, of his kindness and his reckless bravery. But of the dusky-eyed, passionate-hearted girl whom he had made his wife as he lay dying, of the visit of the good curé to the English lines next day that he might give the chaplain poor Hughie's short and simple will and leave in his hands the carrying out of its provisions, he told her never a word.

It was on the morning of Christmas Eve that, to his acute astonishment, he met the chaplain in the middle of the village.

"It isn't so very astonishing, dear chap," the latter said, laughing at Okenshaw's amazed face. "I'm down on that business of poor Thornton's. This is the first chance I've had of winding up his affairs."

"Then are you staying at the Dene?"

"No, I'm staying at the manor. Well, good-by, my dear fellow. See you again later, I hope," and he was gone and Bob was left staring straight before him, cold and still. He had come down upon "that business of poor Thornton's" and he was staying at the manor!

That night Winifred learned the truth. The mistletoe hung in the hall as it had hung every Christmas Eve for generations. But this year there was no laughing group of girls and boys to see it. Winifred's hand went unconsciously to the locket under her black dress in which lay the twig Hughie had broken for her "for re-

membrance" only a year ago. Only a year ago—and to-night there was with them the man who could give her the details of his death!

They were sitting, just the three—Winifred, her father, and their guest—in the glow of the great fire in the hall when he did.

"Poor Thornton!" he said softly. "He made a brave end, and those who knew him as you did will be sure he would. He was surprised by a small raiding party—Heaven only knows where they came from—and he killed five before they brought him down. It was a good end. I don't think a soldier could ask a better. It is the girl I'm sorry for, not Thornton."

"The girl!" echoed the squire under his breath. "What girl?"

"The girl he married. She was the beauty of the village, and as good a little thing as ever stepped. He married her an hour or two before he died, and he left everything he had to her. That's what I'm down here about, you know. They put his affairs into my hands. Little Fifi, I find, inherits quite a considerable fortune. She will be a rich woman, according to Sainte Hilaire standards."

"Married!" echoed the squire, aghast. "God bless my soul!"

"Then why do you pity her?"

The voice was Winifred's, cold and hard as steel. The squire threw one helpless glance at her, sitting white and still in her clinging black, the black that to all her little world, to-morrow, would be a mockery and a smile.

"Well, she was with him when he was killed, and it's been a little too much for her, poor child. It seems to have shaken her reason a bit. She regards herself as responsible for his death, though of course that is absurd. I think we all pity her."

But Winifred, sitting frozen and still in her lying black, did not. Why pity the woman who, if only for an hour, had been Hughie's chosen wife?

Okenshaw saw her next day, standing in the village churchyard after service, shaking hands with all her friends, gentle and simple, in cordial Christmas greeting. His heart leaped at sight of her, for she had taken off the garments of a soul's widowhood she had worn so proudly, only to learn that they belonged to another woman. She met his understanding glance with dark and tragic eyes. Not until they parted at the manor gate did she speak, and then she flung at him a reproach that was almost bitter.

"You knew," she said very low, "and you might have told me!"

For a moment Bob's face worked.

"I couldn't bear to wound you so," he said.

She turned away without a word. Bob, in his tenderness, could not even tell her what Hughie, in his cruelty, had done. It was then that Winifred began really to understand the two men who loved her.

A year later, she married Bob, giving to him that sober second flowering of a woman's heart that in sweetness, richness, and content is worth all and more than all the glow and glory of its first. He is very happy and, mercifully, he will never know that what he did for Winifred was the direct cause of his friend's death. And at an English soldier's grave on a sunny hillside in Northern France another woman mourns, the more hopelessly that, but for one moment's wild anger, she need never have mourned at all.

"Best beloved, if I had trusted you! If I had believed in you! If I had told you—at first—while there was yet time!" she moans.





THE GREAT THEORY & *Eliza Kent*



Author of "Foghorn and Flute," "A Question of Sport," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARREN B. DAVIS

In which a clever girl proves a pet theory, with results that are rather staggering to her.

NOW, Ellen Braley was not only beautiful, but clever and rich as well, and when one is beautiful and clever and rich, it is astonishing that one should bother to cherish in one's bosom a great theory. But Ellen bothered; indeed, she nursed the theory as indefatigably as a good doctor nurses his patients, and the theory grew and waxed strong. Briefly, Ellen's theory was that a woman needs to possess but three things to "*get on*" in the Four Hundred—beauty, dress, and three points in grammar. For generations, her family had worn the velvet coat of aristocracy, and, being thus firmly rooted upon the rock of high society, she experienced a savage joy whenever she saw a struggling climber fall from the dizzy social ladder. Very few, she considered, had the right to sit beside her on that exalted rock.

"I could take my maid, were she pretty enough," she said to Reggie Wilson, "coach her a week or so on the three points in grammar, adorn her in fine clothes, give an affair in her honor, and no one would recognize her as plebeian."

Wilson mildly disagreed with her, probably for the sake of argument, for, you see, he and her theory were quite old friends by now.

"I fear you are cynical," he remarked, with the gentleness of a lover whirling toward the proposal point.

"Look about you any day," she replied, "and you will see women elbowing and pushing their way in." She never mentioned the sterner sex! "Women who have no more right in our society than the jackdaw had in the peacocks' court!"

"Say, that's a fine idea," he exclaimed admiringly, "if one could just prove it!"

"What will you give to have it proved?"

"A box of chocolates?"

"Chocolates are not good for orphans," she laughed. "Don't forget that I'm treasurer of the War Orphans' Home Building Fund."

"Then make it a five-hundred-dollar check for the W. O. H. B. Fund," he replied good-naturedly.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, seeing great possibilities—for the theory, you know. "I'll do it!"

Joy surged through her heart, because now there was no longer a reason why the theory shouldn't be proved. Charity—to the amount of five hundred dollars—demanded that it should be. She allowed Wilson to forget the theory for three long weeks, and then one evening suddenly brought it forth.

"Do you remember our wager?" she asked.

"Our wager?" he repeated.

"Surely! Of what were you thinking?"

"Of how lovely you were last night at the theater. You were quite the sensation, you know."

"It was my new gown," she said, with a shell-like blush, for she knew he intended to propose to-night and she intended to accept. She had been expecting it for the last month, for when a man, especially if he is handsome and wealthy and a prominent artist as well, showers chocolates and violets upon

the guest of honor, Miss Spring Brooke, who, society is told, will arrive to-morrow, you know, is——"

"By George!" he cried, as she paused expectantly. "Do you mean to say that you're going to do it?"

"I really do," she replied. "I found a maid within three days pretty enough to answer my purpose—he had to be pretty, you know—and she's as exquisite as a Dresden-china shepherdess.



"Behold, I've come to spend the night!" Alice exclaimed gayly.

you all winter, by the time the March winds blow, you naturally feel that the psychological season has arrived and that a proposal is as much in order as a new spring bonnet. "But to return to our wager," she continued. "You remember you were to give a check to the War Orphans' Building Fund if I succeeded in palming off my maid on the Four Hundred. Well, I'm giving a dance to-morrow night, you know, and

Her mother was a washerwoman, dead now, and her father breathed his last in a gutter. She's a splendid specimen, and fortunately I knew just where to find her. And now she's brushing her hair every day until it's turning to gold—and otherwise practicing to be a society girl for one night. She hasn't been hard to train, for she went to school until she was fourteen."

"Have you considered the after ef-

fects?" he asked, a little stupidly, she thought. "Suppose she shouldn't want to return to the old life? I should think it would be a cruel experience in some ways."

Ellen shrugged her beautiful shoulders.

"My dear man," she said, "you know I can't change the current of her life entirely. To me she's only proving a theory that I have long entertained. And she understands it thoroughly—not the theory, but that it's for only one night. And to show you how really considerate I am of her, I've promised that she may sleep until noon the following day—until the clock strikes twelve, you know, when, like Cinderella, she must return to her rags."

"All the same, I should think it would be hard on her," he said. Then, "She has rather an odd name."

"Yes—and it's a perfect fit, for she babbles like a brook babbling in the spring," she replied. "She was clerk at a lace counter before she came to me. She's a charming child of her class and will be much happier with me than she was shut up in that old store."

"I know she couldn't help but be happy with you," he replied. "But some way it doesn't seem quite fair to lift her up for one night and then let her fall again."

"It's an honor to her," Ellen replied. "Now don't let your artistic temperament make you unhappy over it, for it's an experience she would never have otherwise, and that means a tremendous lot to any woman, rich or poor. She has me to thank, I think. And I'm sure she would be greatly disappointed if anything should happen to keep her away from the dance. And just watch our friends accept her with wide-open arms and never ask a question! What a joke! They never analyze. They'll accept the silk gown and the pretty face as sufficient evidence!"

And then, as she had aired her theory

and prepared him for what was coming to-morrow, she gave him a languid glance and drooped her pretty eyes till her tender gaze rested upon the glowing embers of the big grate fire. But, alas, before he could even so much as lay his hand upon hers—the proper prelude to every proposal, you know—there came a sharp ring at the doorbell, and Alice Wentworth and Jack Burner entered.

"Behold, I've come to spend the night!" exclaimed Alice gayly. "Mother and Cherrie have gone to Newark, and it was too lonesome for anything, so I just decided to run over here to you."

Alice was a dear friend, and Ellen was always glad to see her, but sometimes one's best friends appear at painfully inopportune moments! However, when Ellen went out into the hall with Wilson to bid him good night, he pressed her hand tenderly, and she retired that night quite satisfied with life and immensely satisfied with herself.

The next morning, as she was sipping her hot chocolate, the telephone tinkled. It was Wilson.

"You know I've been thinking about that wager of ours," he said. "And say, it's as good as won, for I know anything *you* undertake is always a success. So I've decided to just make out my check this morning to the Orphan Fund and send it over, and then we won't take any chances on upsetting that girl's feelings, you know."

"No, no!" she exclaimed laughingly. "You shall not spoil our fun now! What did I tell you about that artistic temperament? She'd be horribly disappointed, and then there's my theory. I must see it actually proved. And as to the girl, why, the poor thing would never forgive you if she knew you were trying to rob her of the only little fun she's ever had!"

As usual, she had her way. And that afternoon she put Spring Brooke through a "dress rehearsal," and was greatly satisfied with the results.

"When you don't smile, Spring," she said, "you look like a youthful Madonna, and when you do smile you look like a saucy fairy. I tell you this frankly, so that it will give you assurance for to-night, but you positively must not let it turn your head! To-morrow, when the clock strikes twelve, you must forget it as completely as if it had never happened."

And Spring Brooke promised.

That evening, when the guests began to arrive and Ellen introduced Wilson to Spring Brooke, she expected to see his face light up with admiration, because, as an artist he would be able to detach the beauty of the girl from what she really was and see it as a separate, distinct thing. But the light she saw in his eyes was more like pain than admiration.

"You'll frighten the poor thing to death if you look at her that way," she whispered. "She doesn't know that you know, but your look will give it away. Isn't she pretty?"

"Pretty?" he repeated. "Oh, yes, yes indeed—quite pretty. I greatly fear I shall lose my five hundred."

"Beyond a doubt you will," she laughed.

"And what will happen," he asked, "if the—the girl finds it impossible to resume her normal ways?"

"Ah, you mean what if it turns her pretty head? Well, I've thought of that, and of course it's quite possible. But if



"Your guest is certainly charming," Alice remarked.

it does happen, I have my remedy. She can go back to her lace counter. She'll probably go back anyway, because I don't believe she'll ever make a really good maid. She lacks the training, you know."

"I agree with you," he replied. "I don't believe myself she would ever make a good maid."

"Go dance with her," she commanded. "The girl can really dance beautifully. All classes dance well now, you know. And she seems to be quite the sensation, doesn't she? Look how Lorado Johns and Colonel Radcliffe hover about her! And even Mrs. Kephart Hill has taken to her! And not one question, not so much as a glance of inquiry!"

About an hour after this, Ellen paused for a moment's chat with Alice, who knew nothing of the secret of Spring Brooke's identity.

"Your guest is certainly charming," Alice remarked. "It seems strange I don't remember your mentioning her when you returned from Florida last spring. I just came from the conservatory, and she and Reggie Wilson are in there. He is gazing at her exactly as if she were to be tried and executed at the stake! Do you suppose they were friends before?"

"Oh, no," laughed Ellen. "He probably wants her to sit for his new picture, and he's trying to see in his mind's eye how she will do in certain positions. That always makes him miserable, you know."

Ellen retired that night exultantly happy, for her theory had been proved beyond a doubt—Spring Brooke, a girl with a grammar-school education, the daughter of a washerwoman and a drunkard, had been a raging success socially, and every one was wild over her. And so she fell asleep peacefully, with no thought of the probable feelings of

her little Cinderella when the clock should strike the hour of twelve to-morrow.

Perhaps it was fate that Ellen herself should open her eyes just as the big grandfather's clock on the stairway thundered off that momentous hour, or perhaps it was the cook's knocking upon her door that awoke her. Anyway, she awoke to receive from the cook's hand a letter, which she hastily tore open. It was from Wilson!

DEAR MISS BRALEY: I herewith inclose the check for the Orphans' Fund. Consider the proof of your theory a magnificent success. You will perhaps be interested to learn that your guest of honor, Miss Spring Brooke, and I were married this morning at ten o'clock. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you at our apartments after Mrs. Wilson and I return from our honeymoon. Cordially yours,
REGGIE WILSON.

Ellen read the note once, twice, thrice, and then, with a wild sob, tore it into shreds.

"Ah," she cried, "I have cherished in my bosom a viper!"

But she didn't make it clear which was the viper—the man, the woman, or the theory.



BY THE RIVER

THE river runs as green as jade, so close the willows grow;

Twig and root, they cling to it and tinge its shining way,
And all the air is greenish, too, with clouds that gather low,

Till they drift apart and hide themselves, in April's roguish play.

A green place and a clean place; few hills to make a shelter,

For we verge on prairie country where there's dearth of rock and shade,
But the quiet of the landscape cools the pulse's helter-skelter.

Little hint here of a battle or the sounds that make afraid!

Hard to dream! And yet a tremor, just a little hint of trouble,

Lurks behind the gentlest moment, dims the sunshine's brightest glance.

There are seams that smoke with peril, there are houses razed and scattered,
Where of late the poplars whispered in the once fair land of France.

But they say that song in No Man's Land still swells the skylark's breast;

Spring is there, and banks are greening that the bitter scythe has spared.
There is manly work and noble, sturdy faith and woman's comfort,

And the thrill of one great mission that our banded sons have dared.

JEANNIE PENDLETON HALL.



THE UNEXPECTED THING—

Anna Alice Chapin

Author of "Her Bit," "The Under Trail," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT HENCKE

"She could give him up—so he belongs to her," said one of these women. But for some mysterious reason, she herself never married.

MADGE KARNEY put down the newspaper with a hand that shook a trifle. Her sharply cut, thinly pretty face was white and stony, and her eyes burned out of it like blue coals. She was not beautiful, but she was terribly alive and showed it even under that temporarily frozen mask. She was of those born to suffer atrociously, unmitigatedly, and she was suffering now.

In front of her was the printed paragraph that had plunged a thousand daggers into her heart—a stab for every tiny curve and angle in every tiny letter. It was a small thing, that paragraph, to hurt so incredibly. It read like this:

"Mr. and Mrs. Cabot Coudert have formally announced the engagement of their daughter, Celia, to Mr. John Cameron."

After her sick gaze had fed its miserable fill of this, it crawled on, agonized, yet avid, to the next part:

"Miss Coudert is in her first season, one of the undisputed belles among the débutantes of the year. Mr. Cameron's attentions have been commented upon since her coming-out dance at Christmas. Society is in all ways de-

lighted over so suitable a match between two such popular and fortunate figures."

Madge's eyes refused longer to obey her feverish will. They closed, as if she were fainting, and indeed she had never been nearer it. The paper slid to the floor. It seemed a long time after that the piercing cold of her little bedroom struck through her surface insensibility and roused her. Shivering violently, she moved her cramped limbs and stood up. As she did so, her own reflection confronted her in the green and unflattering mirror on the other side of the room. She would have laughed at so grotesque a vision if her lips had not felt so curiously stiff.

She made up her mind, quite quietly and definitely, to see Celia Coudert at once—that very day. Jack Cameron belonged to her—to her, Madge! What society beauty dared even look at him? Her very fury exhausted her. She went about her dressing methodically, with outward calm. The blind rage within her left her curiously cold outwardly. She would make them suffer—make both suffer, oh, yes! Nothing would be too ignoble a tool for



"I'm going to tell that girl the truth—about you!" she said.

her to use. But—strange how dull her sensibilities were! She could not seem to rouse a single nerve to active sensation.

Fifteen minutes later, she was in Cameron's rooms. After a very long wait—oh, very long; it must have been twelve minutes, nearly, after his servant got her name—he came out in an Oriental-looking dressing gown, handsomer than she had ever seen him, trying to be nonchalant and at ease.

"Hello, Madge!"

But it wouldn't quite do.

She wasn't the type to which one could apply easy casuistries. She had been, true, too intimate with him to

demand anything—a quaint paradox, to be sure!—but she sat there looking at him with the utter and simple bewilderment of a deeply hurt child. He did not like it, and frowned, with a man's quick leap for a comfortable footing.

"Come, Madge, don't be a wet-blanket! I thought you'd be laden with good wishes for me to-day!"

"Why?" she demanded blankly.

He frowned again, and this time he flushed. It is a strange truth that a man who has loved and possessed has a curious, almost womanish modesty in even recalling it to himself. It is, of course, in inverse proportion to his

real feelings in regard to the episode. A woman is usually—again by a curious paradox—far more honest. If she has truly loved and given, she is far less likely to hide it than the man. Make of this what you will; it is the truth.

Cameron and Madge, these two who had once been lovers, faced each other across a great gulf. It was she who saw the more clearly, because she had been stripped of all sensation save pain; there were no bandages about her eyes. The man was in his rosy labyrinth for the nonce. As if—perhaps futilely—to soften the woman who stood before him with something implacable in her look, he said:

"Come on! Be a sport, Madge! You don't want to make trouble between me and the girl I love!"

He raised a silver-framed photograph of Miss Coudert and looked at it.

Madge Karney stared at his face as if it were new to her. And it was. The clean-cut features were more familiar to her than anything else in all the world; it was the expression investing them that was unfamiliar.

The vivid hazel eyes had laughed into hers a hundred times; the full, firm mouth had touched hers; the fine profile had been the object of her eager sidelong looks, motoring, walking, at the play. But those same eyes and lips softened by tenderness, ennobled by grave sentiments, were like those of a stranger. Never, in her maddest idealization of her very good-looking lover, could she have dreamed that Jack Cameron could look like that.

Puzzle and amazement gave way slowly to a deep, dull hurt. It was not a sharp pain; that sort is usually transient. It is the quiet ache, not acute, not hysterical, that lasts and lasts, getting not less, but more, with the passing of time. Time, the great physician, Time with the healing touch, has no arts to subdue this exquisite and

secret suffering. It is cumulative and becomes in time quite intolerable, but, unluckily for its victims, it does not kill.

Until that moment of incredible awakening, of immeasurable loss, Madge had believed at least in Jack Cameron's past love for her. That it was past had not, to her understanding, discounted or discredited its existence in the first place. Madge was not disposed to believe in the lengthy endurance of love—on the part of men. She might cherish an undying passion, but she was a woman and that was different. The male affections were at their best ephemeral; this was her perfectly sincere conviction. And ever since Cameron had broken with her, she had clung to the one consolation possible to her loneliness—the fact that he had loved her. Not for long, and not, perhaps, in the desperate fashion of men in books and women in real life, but in his own very charming and satisfactory way, he had loved her.

And now she knew that all that had been the sheerest delusion. He had not loved her even "in his way"—he had not loved her at all. For he loved now—she could see that—and the difference was rather terrible. This dark, beautiful girl whom she had regarded with furious jealousy as her successor, her rival, was in truth neither. A rival must be at least an equal. This woman was not an equal; she was a superior, beyond measure—a far goddess, crowned by John Cameron's first real love.

Jack looked back to Madge with a quick tightening and sharpening of the lines of his face. The betraying sentiment was past; he was cold steel now, bared for combat.

"What are you going to do about it, anyway, Madge?" he demanded.

It was the wrong touch. She flared like white fire.

"I'm going to tell that girl the truth

—about you!" she said, speaking as a hammer might speak upon an anvil if it were given words.

She left him, and she went straight to Miss Coudert with the ugly thing called blackmail in her heart. She was very poor, was Madge Karney. She had never taken money from Jack Cameron save for such temporary accessories to his pleasure as might be grouped under new and dainty things for the enhancement of her curious, half-haggard charm. She was not of the ancient profession. When she was not with him, she lived a life of bitter asceticism, almost of penury. Nevertheless, she was contemplating blackmail; not the blackmail to which the newspapers are too well used, but a desperate, defiant flinging to the four winds of the hungry world of the scraps of her romance. He had left her nothing to treasure; well, she would throw it to the wolves and jackals.

And first she would see the woman—the One Woman who had unlocked the door of Cameron's heart. After she had seen her, she would tell her—everything. If she, this other woman, loved him—as good women do love—Madge's story would fall like a flaming sword between her and the ultimate golden dream of marriage. It would be broken up. And after that—Madge's heavy little head would not work very far beyond that point. She merely felt that the jumping-off place came about there.

So she went to see Miss Celia Coudert, as she had gone to see John Cameron, on the same morning on which their engagement was announced.

Her name was brought up to Celia while she was fussing over some flowers Jack had just sent her. She had not the faintest idea as to who her visitor was, but she was in a pleasant, cordial, expansive mood that day and asked to have Miss Karney brought up.

Celia Coudert was one of those sen-

suously pretty young creatures whose appearance belies their temperament. Dark and exotic in type, she suggested fathomless depths of emotion and the warmth of a tropical nature. She was decidedly the style of girl who would be expected to consider the world well lost for love. As a matter of cool fact, she was marrying Jack Cameron for his money, or believed she was, with as much finesse and as little compunction as any businesslike merchant ever showed in negotiating a shrewd bargain in high-priced wares.

The arrangement was almost perfect—as nearly so, in fact, as anything human and temporal can be. She had beauty, youth, and birth; he had wealth, brains, and a certain charm, which had carried him far, socially speaking. Though his family was inferior to hers, he was in no sense beneath her, even discounting his incidental, though highly desirable, millions. His position in New York finance gave him something of the prestige that an ancient, distinguished name gives a man in the older aristocracies. Altogether, he was a most desirable catch, and Miss Coudert, popular as she was, was considered distinctly lucky to have landed him.

For her part, she was most content. No more uneasiness as to the lowering seasons, each one a trifle less rosy and promising, a shade more ominous and threatening. No more struggle with what might be left of her finer instincts as she considered this man or that as a possible dupe, life partner, provider, or whatever decency and her passing mood might induce her to style him. She was satisfactorily *rangée* for life—with some one whom she could heartily like, and of whom she could never conceivably be ashamed. In the state of modern society, that was a great deal—an astonishing deal—to be able to say.

She was looking at his picture and



Strange things happened there in the gold-and-gray drawing-room. For Jack said: "Madge!" And she said nothing at all, only hid her face in her hands.

thinking some of these things inarticulately when Madge Karney was shown in.

Madge was encased, had Celia but known it, in a shining mail of hatred. She would gladly have killed the soft, brown-eyed, pleasant-voiced girl before her. Only, murder requires planning and execution, and Celia's amiable courtesy was hampering. After a few helpless breaks, Madge set her teeth and began to speak. Celia's eyes widened in genuine amazement and concern the while, and the very sincerity of the other aroused Madge to a more viperish mood. More than ever,

she was determined that they should pay, these two. She didn't want their money, but they should pay in suffering for what she had suffered.

She began with the real beginning—an unerring instinct showing her how best to appeal to another woman. She spoke of the wonderful first days, the glamour, the dream that came true, the fairy tale that lingers in every girl woman's heart until she knows that it can never be real. She told of the hour of disillusionment, too. And as she talked, she began to see, slowly, as if through a mist, the face of the girl who heard her—another girl, after all,

who loved as she loved, who might be losing all, in this very moment, as she had lost all.

A desperate something clutched at Madge's throat and choked her utterance. Her eyes were deep and strange, and she put out her hands as if clinging to something she could not see.

"He—he never loved me," said Madge Karney, potential blackmailer.

Then she went home. She felt very queer—not ill, exactly, but exhausted in every inch of her being. Though the words she had just said were the most significant, not to say the most momentous, words of her life, she did not feel vitally conscious of the fact. She wanted to get home and into bed, that was all.

But Celia Coudert was the looker-on who, in this instance, saw practically all of the game and a good deal that technically and even ethically belonged outside the game. What she saw was doubly a revelation, both as to the situation and as to herself. The two elements had to be adjusted somewhat before she could arrive at any definite or directing decisions.

Celia saw herself for the first time as rather a little person. Her whole upbringing, environment, and cultivated atmosphere would seem to establish the fact that she was quite the opposite—one of those open-hearted, free-spirited, lovely young natures born naturally and deservedly to love and happiness. But she looked at Madge Karney's pinched, thin little face and her haggard, yet beautiful, eyes, and she blushed for herself. Celia Coudert was ashamed. Love had passed her by to stare at her through the weary blue eyes of this mysterious girl who, it

seemed, had taken the trouble to look her up in order to assure her that Jack Cameron had never loved her.

Celia was not an intellectual, but she retained traces of her mother sense. She saw through poor little Madge's poor little play as one sees through a cheap and flimsy veil. Only something splendid and dignified about Madge's spirit made the veil—to Celia's eyes, at least—quite beautiful. And as Madge had awakened at the sight of Jack's face, so did Celia awaken at the sight of Madge's.

"She loves him, and I don't," she thought, "and so I've no right to him. She could give him up—so he belongs to her."

Then she wrote a little note to Jack and another to Madge, and when they both came in answer, she stayed in her room and cried, and strange things happened down in the gold-and-gray drawing-room.

For Jack said: "Madge!"

And she said nothing at all, only hid her face in her hands. And after a while, a demure maid brought in a little note—for Jack.

I've changed my mind. I'd hate to be married to a man with bad taste, and you'd show that if you chose a woman who didn't love you in preference to a woman who did. C.

Flippant, wasn't it? But it worked awfully well. For Jack was so angry that he asked Madge to marry him, there and then, out of pique. And since he had always cared quite a lot for her and she was adoring and adaptable, they lived happily ever after.

But beautiful Celia Coudert, for some mysterious reason, never married.



BREAD UPON THE WATERS

by Katharine Haviland Taylor



Author of "Cecilia of the Pink Roses," "My Paris Label," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

What is a love affair without a delightful misunderstanding or a quarrel? You will love this charming story of Celestia's affair—her heartbroken young officer, her "godson," and her maid.

MISS CELESTIA VAN DORN PAGE had stood behind a bunting-decorated booth for all of a long, weary afternoon. Her feet ached because she had danced very hard the night before and a very good part of that morning. Her eyes mirrored a tired brain and held the echo of a great ache. She would kill the next person, she reflected, who said anything even slightly relative to war work. Then, leaning across her counter, she straightened an etching which had been presented by its famous maker. When she looked up, she looked into the eyes of the man whom she could not accept and could not dismiss. He smiled and lifted a cap.

"I've been looking for you," he said, growing red.

"You seem to have that habit," answered Celestia with some acridness. She wished the Red Cross would let her sit down to raise money for it! The young man to whom she had spoken grew even more red, red under a heavy coat of Texas tan.

"Please be good to me!" he murmured pathetically.

"Oh, Ted!" said Miss Celestia Page. "You weary me so! Don't go around with that lost-dog expression! It isn't *done*, you know. It was all right in the

Duchess, but nowadays——" She stopped speaking, for some one had drawn near and was looking at a little piece of cloisonné, which, rumor said, had been presented by a pianist from Poland, a pianist whose "Minuet in G" has been heard at various concerts. A tiny bit of a bowl, satsuma, that stood near it, had come from a woman whose three boys were in the service and whose husband had died in the desert while he tried to conquer a slowly creeping disease.

"This has a history, too," said Celestia. "The owner is a woman in New Jersey who has three boys in the service and whose——"

"Isn't there a piece here which was given by Farrar?" asked the person before the counter, a person who had a great many beads on her frock.

"I'll see," said Celestia, turning to a list.

The discrimination made her rather ill. If they really wanted to help, why did they so snatch the obvious prizes? It was like the girls of her set who adopted soldiers, the girls who saw to it that their soldiers were halfway possible and wouldn't be a positive embarrassment if they should turn up with an "entertain-me" expression. The woman made a purchase, made a little

objection to the price, and then, greatly to the happiness of Lieutenant Theodore Riggs, made her get-away.

"Look here," said the young man in khaki, swallowing hard and evidently finding some difficulty in speaking, "what I want to know is, Miss Page—is whether you think I'm not good enough for you—whether——"

"It is hardly a question of goodness," said Miss Page, in her cool, beautifully toned voice. "Hardly that. The moral side doesn't enter. I've no doubt you are an excellent young man." She stopped, her eyes twinkling. "But," she went on, sobering, "we have had different manners of life. We might as well recognize that. Your friends are not the sort of people who would naturally be my friends. Your habits of life are not mine. I have always had a great conviction"—she paused—"that—in a truly happy marriage—one that would remain so—one should pick out an opposite in thought and a parallel in life. It is the little things that are vital, after all, the little things that loosen or tighten the bond. A difference in thought stimulates, but a difference in habit irritates."

"I don't see——" began the young man, whose eyes were beginning to look hurt.

"You don't want to see," responded Celestia, with some truth. "Imagine, if you will, please, the many things over which we would—not actually quarrel—one doesn't do that, of course—but disagree—the dinner hour, the kind of dinner, party calls, going places, the sort of friends, the proper thing to do, entertaining——"

"Lord knows I hate all that sort of thing, but I'd do anything!" he broke in.

Celestia went on without noticing him:

"Your over-deferential manner would probably come to irritate me; your insistence on calling my friends 'miss' and

'mister' even after you've met them numbers of times; your feeling that you are not my sort. You might be, if you didn't feel so intensely the divide; but—since you do, and it's a mentally erected wall and therefore very difficult to destroy, perhaps we'd better not try."

Celestia paused. Her feet were aching frightfully, and the lights and the noise had made a tight little pain between her eyes. She looked at the man before her with intense irritation. He had bothered her so, even making her debate with herself about the wisdom of it. She had never found an inner debate necessary in the cases of other young men. He had bothered her frightfully, and been annoying. Her head ached harder, and she attributed to him all her unrest. Her patience snapped; her tired body made it. She shrugged her shoulders and raised her beautiful eyebrows.

"Then it's good-by?" she heard him say hoarsely.

"If you like," she responded airily. He certainly didn't care, since he was discouraged so easily. Men's affections were very superficial; it hurt to recognize it, but one had to.

He was turning.

"Teddy!" she heard herself say.

He wheeled suddenly, stretching a beseeching hand across the counter.

"Dear?" he whispered.

She found herself without words. When he called her "dear"—he had but once before—she found that she was stirred, filled with unrest and worse—a positive fear. The feeling was like nothing that she had met in her well-ordered life, and because of that and the natural shrinking from the natural—that had been ironed, as something belonging to "the people," from her existence—she turned from it quickly, to the assured, the calm, and the known.

"Would you let me drive you home to-night?" he asked, his voice still a little rough.



"This has a history, too," said Celestia.

She shook her head.

"You see, I don't know when I shall be able to get away," she explained. "I don't want to hurt you, Teddy, but I feel that I am right."

The young man before her raised his cap.

"Very well," he said, "I understand you. I'm sorry to have annoyed you." And, turning quickly, he strode off.

Celestia was not given to tears. They came with difficulty and only with real woes. But now her eyes filled.

"I'm so tired," she thought. "And my feet ache so! I wish I were *dead*! Why he has to be so stubborn! It disturbs me so. I'm sure I was as kind as any one could be. It was all true, all——"

Her reflections ceased, for a slender

girl with red-golden hair, who was dressed in green and hung with jades, drew near.

"Celeste," she said, "Captain Lawrence has been here, and we've been auctioning off his regiment to god-mothers. Means letters, you know, and cigarettes and socks, but, as Mrs. Wylis-Smythe says, one *should* pay for the privilege. It's only a little form of doing what we can, our *bit*. There's one man left. His name is Gus Weikel. No one seemed attracted to his name. Five dollars *has* been given for this privilege. We've stopped the auction, but I knew you'd want to do something."

"My purse is hanging on that barrel hoop," answered Celestia with some irony. "Make yourself entirely at home. Only, for Heaven's sake, *don't* come again! I haven't a cent left. I'm going to take that satsuma thing. I want the woman to know it sold well. She has three boys——"

"Awfully sweet! How much are they charging for this Pennell? I spoke to father about it. If he'll only remember. My *dear*, you look dead!"

"What sort of thing do you write these boys?" asked Celestia, not noticing the remark about her appearance.

"Oh, one inspires them with *high ideals*. Ask them to write to you *frankly* and tell them that interest in them lies close to your heart, that you are watching and waiting and *hoping*, don't you know? They are 'fighting for freedom,' as Mrs. Burke Cadwallader says, and a friendly interest is what they deserve, and naturally it's sweet to them! Doris Egmonton had the most *perfect* letter from a Belgian. He called her 'Dear little godmother of cigarettes,' and she was so appealed to that she sent him barrels of them—her own sort, scented. Don't you think scented cigarettes are rather—you know—*common*? But they had her monogram on them, and she thought that that was

an intimate touch which he would enjoy. The address is on this paper. I wouldn't be discouraged if I were you. Of course, his name is *not* impressive, but, as the Bible says—or was it Henry James?—"What's in a name?" I read so much, I get *everything* mixed. Thank you, dear. I must go. 'By!'"

Celestia Page looked after her friend and then down at the paper. She had undertaken it; she would do what she could. Interest in them *was* at her heart. After all, too many things were left unsaid. He might die or be gassed or something terrible, go in loneliness without a word of appreciation unless she said it. If he were blinded, she would get him something interesting to do.

She began to think of it. She dismissed chickens; they were so soulless, and she had always hated them from a motorist's standpoint. He could make brooms, perhaps, or weave baskets. Baskets would be much more romantic than brooms; she settled on baskets. And she could draw sweet little designs for them! She began to feel a warmth toward her godson. Her thoughts shifted. After all, she *had* been cross to Ted. She would write him in the morning. A clock somewhere struck eight, and one of the younger set stopped in passing.

"Do come in here and take this off my hands for the evening!" begged Celestia. "I'm so tired! All afternoon, you know. I'll love you forever, Alice, if you will! You *darling* child! I can never thank you enough!"

Alice slipped behind the counter, and Celestia hunted around for her wraps. After a few moments, she was going downstairs with and against a crowd. She'd write Ted, when she reached home. Of course marrying him was absurd, but, on the other hand, losing his friendship was unthinkable. She had come rather to depend on that. She had once told him, in one of the

hackneyed little phrases of her class, that he had "a talent for friendship."

This is the note she wrote:

MY DEAR TED: Sorry if I was a bit cross to-day. Frightfully tired, you know. Do forgive me, be friends with me, and come to tea to-morrow afternoon, early—for there are bound to be others later. Ever sincerely,
CELESTIA.

It was the first time she had signed herself without her last name. She knew it would please him. After she finished it, she stood it on a table. Her maid came in, got her into bed—not unskillfully, although she was a new maid—and then vanished. The letter stood on the table, forgotten. Celestia saw it once over the top of Gerard's new book—every one was reading it—and decided that it should go early in the morning.

But it did not.

When the new maid brushed Miss Celestia van Dorn Page's lovely hair the next morning, she looked at a photograph of Lieutenant Theodore Riggs which stood on the mantel.

"Ain't he nice?" she said, with an unusual freedom.

Miss Celestia Page did not respond. She could not find an adequate reply.

"I met him at a dance," went on the new maid, "last night—down at the Crystal Palace. He had a grand-looking girl with him, all dressed in green velvet. But him and me had the spotlight dance, and then he shook her. Had a grouch, like, at first, but that wore off. He's a elegant dancer. Took me home. Says he was going to kiss me good night, but when he got here, he didn't, and went awful quick. Maybe he's bashful?"

Miss Celestia Page grew red, then white.

"Have you ever been in service before?" she asked frigidly. The new maid did not understand the term. "Have you ever *worked* before?" Celestia continued.

The new maid had cooked and done general housework, it seemed, in Janesburgh, New Jersey. She had been "one of the family, like." The young man of the family had once "took" her to the theater. Then she had borrowed money and learned "off" a hair-dressing parlor how to arrange hair, and—here she was. It was a grand time, she explained; so many girls were going into munition factories and so on that places were easy to find.

Miss Celestia Page said, "Indeed?" after all this; and after her chilly little "indeed?" had cooled the atmosphere ten degrees, she added some advice.

"One thing you must learn," she said in her usual cool-voiced way. "Conversation with your employer will not be expected, even tolerated—if it were not so difficult to find a maid——"

Miss Page paused, but the maid, who was unused to innuendoes, did not grasp what was meant.

"And," went on Miss Page, "naturally you and your mistress will not have the same friends."

After the maid left the room, Miss Page carefully and slowly took Lieutenant Riggs' photograph from a standing gold frame and tore it in half, and after this—it was tossed into a waste basket. Next a letter was torn across and went into the same place. And then Miss Page sat down and cried dismally and seriously, which is a miserable manner in which to cry. The shower did not clear up her mental weather, but left her feeling that the sky was entirely dark.

It had been, she decided, quite as she had thought—utterly impossible. They were not suited, and he—he—— Such a common, crude, sordid happening! And she had written him that friendly little note! She thanked Heaven she had found him out before it was too late!

And then she cried harder than ever.

The next few months made a good many changes in Celestia. She was nervous and jumpy when the telephone rang during April and May. She went through her mail with feverish interest, and then slammed her letters aside unread. In the early part of June, a paper announced that a certain regiment had arrived safely in France, and Miss Page ceased waiting for the telephone and pawing hectically through her mail. She grew listless and rather too "don't care" about things in general. However, one thing did interest her—news from France, especially news of American troops. And when she heard that Lieutenant Riggs had been decorated with a French medal—decorated for conspicuous bravery—she tried to write, but could not.

She also went back to New York—they had come to Southampton early—and had nine barrels of waste paper sorted. If she had only known it, the thing she was hunting was in her maid's room, pasted together and almost as good as new. She had torn him, considerably, across the collar.

In the early part of July, she decided that he had *never* loved her and made up her mind that she would dedicate her life to service. She put Jane Addams' picture in a standing gold frame that had once been full of a khaki-clad boy, and began to wear very plain duds, which were dangerously becoming to her. Two young men were unable to keep silent any longer, and asked her—not both at once, but one at a time—whether she wouldn't wear their names after hers and let them supply her peach melbas. She had no difficulty in refusing them, and she did it with alacrity and, it must be confessed, some acidity.

Her godson had at first interested her. He was a vase into which she could pour her helpful and noble inspirations, but—

I shall, in part, reproduce the corre-

spondence. This is letter one from Celestia van Dorn Page to Private Gus Weikel:

THE ELMS. Southampton, Long Island.

MY DEAR ADOPTED SOLDIER: This, my first letter, must of necessity be somewhat restrained. However, I want you to know that I am waiting and hoping, over here, that all is well with you.

Tell me of yourself. Have you a family? Are you well? Is loneliness with you? Write me frankly, so that I may know in what manner to write you; and, if there is anything you want, will you let me know of it? I am sending some Pall Mall cigarettes. Again, if there is *anything* you want, please let me know of it. And believe me to be, most cordially,

CELESTIA VAN DORN PAGE.

And this is Private Gus Weikel's answer to Miss Celestia van Dorn Page.

The letter contained a postcard on which were two doves, nesting on dandelion greens; clasped hands, very evidently a "lady's" and "gent's"; and below, written in speckles of silver, "Friendship's Token." Miss Page surveyed it, shuddered, and then went to stand before Miss Addams' picture. She looked at this steadily and then read the letter.

FRIEND MISS PAGE: no kiddo I ain't married. me for the single. Go as far as you want too. The weather is swell. Say how did you happen to right? I can't remember that I've knew anybody named page except a cross eyed guy who peddled shoestrings. Are you any relation to him. I don't trouble my relations none. Ain't got many beside a aunt in Kansas. She has a farm. One hundred acre.

Thank you kindly for the cigarettes but I'd rather have polar bear. When you chew you don't smell so much. We got a lot of smells here. enough to run a fertiliser factory. write me again girl. letters comes in handy. Sometimes I'm lonely, but not so much. Yrs truly,

PRIVATE GUS WEIKEL

In letter two, Miss Celestia van Dorn Page endeavored to explain the cause of her writing. Two paragraphs were given to this, which I shall not reproduce. They were full of the echo of



"What does this mean?" asked Celestia.

her cool-toned voice, but this thawed at the point where we start:

After all, relations are, if a handicap, a beautiful one. Have you ever thought, Mr. Weikel, of the utter and entire beauty of a close-knit family? Reflect on this and write me of your thoughts. What one does and what happens is so little a part of the individual; but what goes on inside, what happens in the maze of the mind, is the key.

A good boat connection and four weeks brought back this reply:

Sure I've thought about it. everybody nitting ain't they. a old peasant womans nit-

ting here. She nit some long gaitors like. Her daughter wears them. Believe me that girl couldn't get no job in the follies so don't you get jealous. She ain't just nock kneed but nearly. me I'm bow legged but I should worry. more simpson for the bullets to go through. Lem simpson a pal of mine he was acting the fool in a trench yesterday with a frying pan beating on it and letting on to dance *you know how*, a bullet come along and smashed it to peices. gosh we laughed.

What you say about insides is true. I don't know about the mind but I got indigestion fierce. The eats is rotten. we have a pudding made out of everyones old bread sometimes which ain't so bad if you ain't particular about eating what a nother fellow

has bit. goodby girlie don't forget to write.
yrs truly, PRIVATE GUS WEIKEL.

After this there was a lull in the correspondence. Celestia could not bring herself to reply. Every time she thought of her godson who was "fighting for freedom," she was forced to resort to smelling salts. It is one thing to write a romantically minded Frenchman who calls one "sweet little mother of hope," or "cheerer of sunless days," and quite another to write to a young man who calls you "girlie" and requests Polar Bear as an offering.

"I always draw a blank," said Celestia one evening at the dinner table.

The crowd about the table laughed. There had been a general discussion of war correspondence, and Celestia had quoted some of her letters. Her father, a man who gave the impression of seeing much, and who spoke but rarely, was watching her closely.

Much later in the evening, Celestia wandered out on the terrace. She found her father there, smoking a particularly long, black cigar. He was standing half in the shadows, looking down on a moonlit garden.

"My dear," he said, "I'm a little disappointed in you. What did you expect to find in this correspondence? Something of interest to you?"

"No," said Celestia. "But——"

"You have a dangerous habit," said her father, after puffing out a cloud of waving smoke, "of abandoning that which is faintly distasteful to you. It seems to me, under the circumstances, that you should keep on writing this boy and sending him Polar Bear. By the way, my dear, whatever became of that young lieutenant who was here so often at one time? Riggs was his name, wasn't it?"

"Yes, it was. He—well, we misunderstood each other, or rather I came to understand him. I found he wasn't what I thought—and I'm sure he was not really devoted, and I——"

Celestia floundered and stopped. She found it almost incredibly difficult to speak of him.

"More measurements? Feminine measurements are pretty hard to live up to, little girl—remember that. I liked that chap—nice face. What did he do—or not do?"

"I can't tell you, daddy," she answered in a none-too-sure tone.

"Very well," said her father. "But remember just one thing—that before a man sails—he's gone across, hasn't he?—he often does things he wouldn't do otherwise. A feeling of last chance, you know. And often, when a woman hurts a man—and I imagine you hurt him pretty often, for he loved you; even your old money-making dad could see that—he often does things of which he would never dream otherwise. An anodyne sometimes takes queer forms. Remember, my dear, he's gone. He may not come back. I had a cousin with whom I was often in company. We quarreled over a girl—a girl neither of us really loved—puppy stuff, you know—and he fell out of a canoe and drowned. That has taught me that it is never safe to take that risk. We were both too proud to say we were young fools. Forty-five years ago—seems yesterday! Lord, how it hurt—and hurts! He was a fine chap."

Celestia was crying.

"I'll write Private Weikel to-morrow," she said, between little gulps.

Her father slipped an arm around her—a very comforting arm.

"And the other chap?" he asked gently. "I don't want you to, if you have absolute and real proof that he's bad. But I don't think you have that, have you?"

"Do you want to get rid of me?" she asked tremulously.

"Not exactly," he answered. "But—when a man looks at you as he did, and I like him, and when I can see that something is making you unhappy, and

you, who at one time never wept, now cry little salt tears, every time a door slams— Dear, don't let pride spoil your life!"

"It's the war," she lied. "It's gotten on my nerves."

Under cover of the dark, her father smiled.

When Celestia went to her room that night, she found her maid absorbed in the reading of a letter from Private Weikel. She stopped in the doorway, aghast, with the frightened-eyed, sullen maid holding the letter and looking at her.

"What does this mean?" asked Celestia.

The maid did not reply. A supposition slipped into place, and Celestia spoke on its prompting.

"Did you think that was from the young man who took you home from that frightfully common dance place?" she inquired. "I suppose he did not tell you his name. If I were you, Josephine, I would forget him. I've noticed you crying when these letters come. It has annoyed me frightfully. In the first place—straightening my desk does not mean reading my mail, and if you spy on my letters again, you will be discharged. In the second place, you should get over dreaming. It's perfectly absurd for a girl of your station to dream that that sort of a man would marry you! Were you thinking for a moment that he would?"

Josephine cast an outraged look at the letter, sniffed with a dangerously moist sound, and fumbled in her apron pocket for a handkerchief.

"You may go," said Celestia haughtily. "I shall forget this, but if I ever find it has happened again—"

Celestia paused. The pause was eloquent. Josephine went laggingly from the room. Just outside the door, she sobbed.

"What an impression he did make!" thought Celestia. Something tightened

and began to ache around her heart. She grew hot. She hated him, hated him! Write him? Never! She absolutely hated him! Perhaps, if it had been a girl whose appeal was less physical— She tried to stop thinking of it; she would not, she decided, simply would not! But she lay long wakeful, and visions of Josephine and Lieutenant Riggs haunted her until she slept—unhappy, morbid visions which even she felt were far from truth.

She wrote her godson the following day—wrote him under spur of her father's small lecture. She asked him sweetly about himself, about his life. It was a model letter for the interest it revealed, the spirit of help it held. Then she hunted up a sweater, some socks, some khaki handkerchiefs, his requested tobacco, and made them into a package.

After she sent these off, driving to the post office herself and feeling very righteous because of the trouble she had taken, she received a card. It came in the middle of tea hour. Tea was being served on the porch, and there was a gay crowd present—three girls, a young Englishman, a Canadian in officer's uniform, and her mother. The card, showing two people of opposite sexes sitting on a piano and embracing—under the picture the inscription, "Try this on your piano"—bore a message.

Celestia read it, slipped it beneath a sofa cushion, and swallowed visibly, almost audibly, for at least twenty minutes. She also poured cream on top of the lemon in Lord Summerville's tea. On the card was written:

Say kid if you have any flee powder handy can you spare me some. the bugs is fierce.

Extracts from letters of Private Weikel covering periods of six weeks:

Say kiddo how old are you. now don't tell me your no old maid. Yesterday three germans snuk in our trench and done us dirty setting a bum which exploded after

they had went. I ain't much for a german. You can't trust them. Two fellows was killed so that there wasn't enough left of them for the makings. we buried one in a tomato can. now ain't that fierce.

I wear false teeth kiddo do you. I had gold set in mine once when I was flush. we had a concert Tuesday but it wasn't so much. the woman sung in cyetalian. I guess she couldn't speak no english maybe. me I ain't so much for a hunky. they carries nives. Once I nearly got stabbed by a hunk.

Another:

KIDDO: Baby doll, I guess you'll be surprised to see this postmark from England,



And then, evidently because the first kiss interested her, she kissed him again.

won't you, girlie? No I ain't visiting king George. I stopped a bullet and I'm here resting up. It's a grand place to rest. I never seen so much rest in one spot. Ocean Grove hasn't nothing on this. Everybody acts like they had all next week to do their work in. this hospital is in a house, some swell hut kiddo believe your uncle georgie. When I rode up I thought they had me booked wrong, but they hadn't. they asked me right in and says they was glad to see me and all that kind of stuff. I'm used to it. women is always like that with me. I don't know why.

Well, I laid around for a while and yesterday I went out for the first time. they says they was going to give us a outing and they loaded us all in a bus and shunted us out in the back woods. it was a swell drive. if you'd been along my hands wouldn't a got cold neither. We got out a ways and turned in a big gate and they said they'd took us to see some swell fellow a duke or something like it but you wait there wasn't nothing to do but play croquet. a good many of us wouldn't play because we knowed we'd get kidded fierce if it was ever knew in America so we just set around and set around and set around. I never done so much setting in one spot. One fellow says my gawd I wished I was in New York.

Well, after a year or two some guy with whiskers and checked pants come out and asked us in the wigwam to have tea. tea. Ain't that fierce girl. When they come to me I says not me I'm afraid it would go to my head. Tea ain't a mans drink. It was cold in that house and a fellow with froze feet swore something awful. He says why the hell don't they sell one of them there fountains or a pasture lot and put in a furnace. There ain't nothing to warm up at here but the tea pot. He says the red cross ought to give you extra socks and a helmet for visiting in england. He says I could heat my flat with a tea pot but this here my gawd. That there about the flats was true but believe me little angel face this here like he says wasn't no two-room flat. well him and me et sandwiches and something called skones which would have been grand to fire at a tom cat. The fellow with froze feet was awful sore. He says my gawd I wish I had a pan cake and a stine of lager. He says the U. S. that's Gawd's country. Believe me kiddo its right.

Right soon. I'm feeling good now. It took me in the shoulder. I had a fierce fever.

Celestia was greatly tried by these letters. She showed them to her father, who read them solemnly and laughed after she left the room.

"What's the use?" she asked dramatically. "I can't do anything for him! I'm not helping him—and certainly my writing him is not helping me!"

"You undertook it," said her father. "You have no business to abandon it. Since the young man is writing you about the sort of woman he adores, confiding his ideals, as it were, he has, evidently, come to depend on your friendship. Once, when you were eighteen, I offered you three hundred dollars if you would finish a piece of wood carving——"

"It hurt my hands——" she broke in.

"The offer still holds good, for anything that is carried through," he ended without noticing her interruption.

After which, Celestia left the room, and her father, recalling certain passages in the correspondence of Private Weikel, sat shaking with mirth.

Celestia, in a dark-walled library, wrote once more to her adopted soldier and tried to awake in him something of what she termed "consciousness":

Have you no ideals? Do you never think of what you are fighting for? Don't you sometimes wonder what lies beyond death, which, very possibly, lies close to you? Your letters have reflected only that which is surface, and I can't help thinking that locked in your heart is some one's image, a dream or a story. Perhaps you won't understand this at all, but I should think, after your months of touching the worst in life, you must awaken to something that is not scorable or touchable.

You write of the clothes of Queen Mary and King George. Didn't you look at their eyes, think of their goodness? You say the princess is not a "looker," but can't you see more than that in her? Can't you feel how her small heart must ache for the boys of her country who are so bravely meeting death? I have always been sure that our country has thought too much of the surface of things, the manner of life and peoples' manners. I hope that this war will shock us awake and make us think more of the spirit of love and conviction and truth. I have had this brought to me very forcibly. Six months ago I let a surface difference, or a series of them, take from me the dearest thing in the world. And now—I'm afraid too late—I realize it. Please read and read this and try to understand it, for I feel you must be happier for an understanding, that you must be but half living from the lack of it. Wake up, oh, do wake up!

In time she received this answer:

KIDDO: I got your letter this morning, and believe me I was real glad to get it. I like you good. I ain't kidding you, but I guess the time has come for the truth. You tell me to wake up. I ain't no dead guy nor no slow one. no lady has ever said that to me but kiddo you ain't the girl for me. I got a girl. Her and me had a fight and then she went and moved and I don't know where she is. Her name is Josephine Alexander and I guess she's somewhere in New York. You says you'd do anything for me. Maybe you can find her for me.

I thought a lot about telling you this here having a soft heart and hating to hurt the ladies but kiddo I guess you ain't no slow baby yourself for a officer in the next bed to me who was awful sick and raving fierce he bawled out your name all the time.

Celestia Page he'd yell fierce and then celestia celestia dear, dear must I die without you. For nights I couldn't get no sleep but now he's went home and is there I suppose unless a submarine has sank him. He was mashed for sure, now your some little kiddier ain't you baby doll. I could raise hell about your leading me on and righting me first and all but I ain't that kind of a guy. If you find my girl or try to and don't start nothing like a breach-of-promise suit that's all I ask. I have never wrote no fresh letters about waking up anyway.

You asked if I dreamed but I don't so much unless something sets heavy on my stomach. She's real pretty and has a mole over her right eyebrow. Yrs truly,

PRIVATE GUS WEIKEL.

After Celestia read of the officer who was "awful sick," she turned very white, clutched the back of a near-by chair, clung to it for several moments, and then went to the telephone. She called the aunt of Lieutenant Theodore Riggs.

The aunt, who in general was a very comfortable person, stiffened after she heard the name of the calling maiden. She had seen many things, and one of them was the heartbreak in the face of her much-loved nephew; and she felt he had gone to the fighting land wearing a too-reckless attitude. It is sad enough, in all conscience, to see youth go to the haunts of death, but to see youth go wanting death—that is too bitter.

"Miss Riggs," said Celestia unsteadily, "this is Celestia Page. Good morning."

"Good morning," answered Miss Riggs, in a voice that was cut on the straight.

"I—I heard—that Ted was hurt and——"

"He was."

A gulp, then waveringly:

"Very badly?"

"Gassed. Bullet through his hip. Always be lame, I suppose." The aunt's voice had grown a little strident.

There was a silence.

"Where is he?" asked Celestia.

"Here."

"May I come to see him?"

Again there was a little silence, and then the aunt answered.

"I suppose you can," she said. "There is, unfortunately, no law to prevent it. However, don't come and be kind simply because he's been brought home a wreck. He loves you too much for pity. You know that. You sent a broken-hearted man abroad. I suppose you know that, too?"

Celestia did not answer and, after a queer, strangled little noise, the aunt heard the receiver go up. The aunt was not happy. She had not found the satisfaction she had anticipated in voicing the truth. It seemed incredible that that self-sufficient small girl was suffering as she had made Ted suffer, but—The aunt gave it up, shook her head, and then went heavily up the stairs.

"Who was that?" asked a boy who lay on the sofa.

Phone calls and the tinkling of the doorbell had become important, since he had lain so still.

"The grocer," answered the aunt in a too-loud voice. "Out of potatoes," she added as an afterthought.

The boy answered, "Oh," and studied the wall, the pattern of which he knew quite by memory. He closed his eyes.

"Tired?" asked the aunt softly.

"Not especially, dear," he answered.

"But perhaps you'd better rest," she pursued.

"I suppose I *might*," he answered uncertainly. "Feel a little sleepy."

The aunt turned, after his reply, and tip-toed from the room. He, after a moment of conscience trouble, went to dreaming. He could not dream with his aunt in the room, for his dreams were so strong that he felt they showed on his face, quite as sunburn might.

She came up to him.

"I'm so proud of you!" she said.

He did not notice her. He still ached

from the pain of her treatment and *had* to humiliate her a little.

"Don't you care any more?" she asked, and then, even in a broad-day dream, his composure broke.

"Care?" he said to his phantom love. "Care? I'll never stop! I never stopped! I love you, *love* you, *love* you!"

There was a noise at the door. He covered his face with his arm. He had thought she would stay downstairs for a little while. Footsteps came uncertainly across the room.

"Teddy," he heard, and then he uncovered his face. "Your aunt has forgiven me," she went on, and then she found that she couldn't say any more.

She slipped down on a chair by him, fumbled for his hand, and then began to cry—to cry like a very small girl tired out from crying. He felt his own tears slip down his cheeks.

"I'm not very strong yet," he explained, ashamed of not being stiff-legged.

"Oh, my darling!" she whimpered and kissed him, and then, evidently because the first kiss interested her, she kissed him again.

"Think of the differences," he said after a gasp, "and don't let—pity—influence you. What you said is true. I'd try you——"

"Oh, don't!" she entreated. "Don't ever, *ever*! It hurts, hurts so frightfully! Oh, Teddy, *Teddy*!"

And then she hid her face by his on the pillow, and he touched her cheek and stroked her wonderful hair.

Two hours later, a flushed girl with shining eyes went up the steps of the Page house. She went in and upstairs. In her room she rang for a maid. While she waited for her, she went to her desk and hunted out the last letter of Private Gus Weikel.

"Josephine," she said, as a trim person in black and white entered, "I've been a hard mistress. I know it. I should have discharged you because I thought something about you which made kindness to you a real effort and never spontaneous. It made me feel a *fiend* inside, but I couldn't let you go because I thought it would be absurd and letting a circumstance get the better of me. All of which you will probably not understand."

"Yes, miss," said Josephine, whose manner had somewhat improved.

"I have here," said Celestia, waving the last letter of Private Weikel, "a letter from a soldier I adopted. You know the custom?"

"Yes, miss," said Josephine.

"I thought, since I have so little time, that you could take up the correspondence—write him regularly, you know. I'll buy the cigarettes and so on, but he is not to know that. They are to come from you. You quarreled with your sweetheart, didn't you, my dear?"

"Y-yes, miss," said Josephine.

"And you were very unhappy? I know, for I, too, quarreled with my sweetheart. By the way, Josephine, you'd better read that letter. Your last name's Alexander, isn't it?"

"Yes, miss," said Josephine.





OPPOSITES

(A Chorus for Mixed Voices)

By Berton Braley

Women:

Men are all such mussy things,
Dropping ashes on the sashes
Leaving chaos in their tracks!

Men:

Women, they are fussy things,
Always picking on you, kicking
If you aren't as neat as wax!

Women:

Men, the unromantic things,
Simply never will endeavor
To be poets when they woo.

Men:

Women, foolish, frantic things,
Do not season love with reason.
Men can't always bill and coo!

Women:

Men are coarse, voracious things!
Deglutition is their mission,
Food the god to which they pray!

Men:

Women, vain, predacious things,
Rob our purses of sesterces
Just to pay for gay array!

Women:

Men are dull, phlegmatic things.
Much we flout 'em; yet, without 'em,
Life would be a dreary game.

Men:

Women are erratic things,
Warm and chilly, wise and silly,
Yet we love 'em, just the same.



NEW YORK STAGE SUCCESSSES

The Climax

A Comedy

By Edward Locke

This recent revival of "The Climax," with its haunting melody, which had such a successful run nine or ten years ago, has been received with delight.



Eleanor Painter, who plays *Adelina*.

IT is nearly breakfast time in the shabby studio and living room of Luigi Golfanti. Luigi is a mellow, lovable old music master, thirty years ago leading baritone at La Scala in Milan, and later famous as teacher of the voice. The old days are gone, however, and money is none too plentiful with the Golfantis. Pietro, a fiery youth of twenty, is a true son of his father, so gifted musically that you feel he will some day make a name for himself as a composer. He suffers from an exceeding amount of temperament, and is just now deeply in love with charming Adelina von Hagen.

Adelina, rich in talents, too, but poor of purse, came to New York to have her voice trained by Luigi, who is an old friend and relative of her mother's. At first she had a dreary time struggling to adapt herself to hall-bedroom and cheap-restaurant life and from her meager income to pay the overlarge rent for her oversmall room, and for the use of a piano. But after "doubling up" with Uncle Luigi and Pietro, adding her little to their little, and shar-

ing the shabby apartment—keeping it in order as well as cooking the meals—life has been one rosy glow of happiness. Just now she is busy setting the table while she waits for the coffee to boil.

PIETRO (*entering*): Good morning, Adelina. What time is Doctor What's-his-name coming?

ADELINA: Doctor What's-his-name is not his name, Pietro.

PIETRO: Well, what time is Doctor John Raymond to honor us with his company?

ADELINA: For breakfast, at about nine, Signor Pietro Golfanti.

PIETRO (*sitting at piano*): I don't like him—and I wish you didn't.

ADELINA: I know. The same applies to every marriageable man I've met since I came here. Poor Pietro! (*Laughs at his sulky expression.*)

PIETRO: Why didn't he stay in Ohio, where he belongs?

ADELINA: Why didn't I? I came here to study singing. He came to further his studies in medicine.



Doctor Raymond (Roy Walling) Luigi Golfanti (Walter Wilson) Adelina (Eleanor Painter) Pietro (Effingham Pinto).

ADELINA: And just as Jack had him nicely tamed, the dog bit him.

PIETRO: He came here because you came here, and you know it.

ADELINA (*laughing*): Pietro—he must have told you. Did he? But seriously, Pietro, little Jacky Raymond fought my battles when I was Baby Adelina, and through the gawky, long-legged period of my existence, he was my “beau.” When I emerged into three-quarter-length dresses, he had all the symptoms of an intense calf love, something like you’re suffering now. The only difference is you’ll get over yours. His developed—and I wish it hadn’t!

PIETRO (*angry*): Why does he come here? He hates the stage and he hates your singing.

ADELINA: No, Pietro, he doesn’t hate my singing. And as long as I sang sacred solos in Azalia, Ohio, at two dollars per Sunday, he raved about my voice.

PIETRO: Well, he doesn’t rave now. (*Coming close to her*) Why not marry

me, Adelina? I love your singing—I love the stage. Then he couldn’t bother you.

ADELINA (*laughing*): So early in the morning, Pietro! You bother me almost as much as he does. Why not marry him to get rid of you?

PIETRO: That’s it—laugh at me! Some day you won’t laugh. (*Looks unutterable things as he goes to piano.*)

ADELINA: Cousins should never marry, Pietro.

PIETRO (*playing angrily*): Cousins—us—about sixty-fourth!

The expected guest arrives. It is at once apparent that good-looking Doctor John Raymond has a strong personality, that he is capable of intense feeling, and that he has little sense of humor. But with old Luigi at the head of the table, it is a merry little breakfast party. Adelina inquires of Jack about the old friends in Azalia, and relates anecdotes of Reverend Mr. Treadhouse, whom she especially delighted to tease.

ADELINA: He had a ferocious dog, uncle, and Jack was going to tame him by—what do you call it, Jack?

RAYMOND: Mental suggestion.

ADELINA: That's it. And just as Jack had him nicely tamed, the dog bit him. Do you still keep on trying that?

RAYMOND: Oh, yes indeed, but I don't try it any more on dogs.

ADELINA: Whenever I had a headache, you could always cure it.

RAYMOND: They were rather bitter. And I must confess there are some narrow-minded people.

ADELINA: Some? Well, I'm glad I'm away from Azalia, Ohio. If they ever see me again there, it will be in the town hall at two dollars per "see," seats on sale at Root's drug store, corner of Main and Buckeye Streets.

LUIGI: Two dollars! No, five—five!

ADELINA: Five dollars a seat in



LUIGI: *Si!* You see—what did I tell you? Yes? It is a good voice? I have improve' it, yes?

RAYMOND: Yes, Addy. And when you laugh at mental suggestion, don't forget it was with that I cured you.

ADELINA (*reminiscing*): I shall never forget when the music committee gave me Mrs. Tommy Tittlemouse's place in the choir. That sewing circle! Why, they even pulled in my mother's name! "Was I-talian operry singer. Her father a Dutch fiddle teacher." One old cat even asked me if my mother ever wore tights.

LUIGI: Your dear, sainted mother!

Azalia! You'd have to chloroform them!

RAYMOND: Now, Addy, don't rub it in.

ADELINA: Why not? Didn't they rub it in with me? Because my father didn't have any better sense than to think he could make a living teaching them music, was that my fault?

RAYMOND: Of course not. When do you expect to reach the town hall at two dollars a "see," Addy?

ADELINA: Oh, years yet. I'm just be-

ginning. (*Goes out to straighten the adjoining room.*)

LUIGI (*to* RAYMOND): Her voice will one day equal that of her mother's friend, Adelina Patti, for whom she was name' Adelina—but not yet. There is a certain something—I don't know what— But it will come. Then— ah! You shall see how much the voice have improve! When it come to me, it was good—I see the promise. Now it has nearly realize' my hopes.

RAYMOND: You speak of her voice as "it," as if it were a thing apart from her.

LUIGI: Si—that's right. A voice, to a teacher of music, is like the violin to a teacher of violin. It is the instrument, the breath is the bow, the larynx the keyboard—the artist, the singer, is the soul behind the voice. You will hear— Oh, you are a doctor. I wish also for you to note the something—I dunno what to call it. When the voice reaches the middle register, there is a slight loss of evenness—the tone do not balance. I like to know if it is what you call organic?

RAYMOND: I wouldn't be able to judge, but I have a friend, Doctor King, who is a throat specialist. He could tell you, and if it's a simple operation, I'm quite sure he'd do it for me for nothing. If you like, I will take her to him. I might say, however, Mr. Golfanti, that I'm personally opposed to the whole thing.

PIETRO: Opposed to what?

RAYMOND: To this stage business. I love Addy. I've loved and watched over her since she first came to our town, a big-eyed, curly-haired little foreigner. She taught me to love her then—and I've gone on loving her ever since. When her father died, I asked her to marry me, but she had promised to come to you to study. She wanted to be a singer like her mother. She wanted to go on the stage.

LUIGI: Why not? She has the voice—magnetism—everything. Why not?

RAYMOND: Because the stage is no place for a girl who is good or desires to remain so.

PIETRO: That isn't so.

RAYMOND: Show me one woman in your stage life that has reached the top without being the central figure in some scandal, and I'll show you ten that have.

PIETRO: How do you know? (*Sarcastically*) Been slumming along Broadway at night, where every bleached blonde in a loud dress and painted face claims to be an "actress?"

RAYMOND: No! I don't need to. But I know its defiance of conventions. I know the glamour it throws over wrong, making it seem right.

PIETRO: You know about as much of real stage life—as I do about that one-horse town you come from, and have as much right to criticize it!

LUIGI: Signor Doctor, if all the people on the stage were as bad as the general public would like to believe, the stage would be a hell of a place—but it is not.

RAYMOND (*rising*): Say what you will, I maintain that the stage is no place for a girl, and I shall do everything in my power to keep Addy away from it.

LUIGI: I am afraid that will be impossible, Signor Doctor.

PIETRO (*sneeringly*): You might try to do it with your mental suggestion.

With Pietro at the piano, Adelina, at Luigi's request, sings an aria, that Raymond may see the marked improvement in her voice. At several places in the song where the middle register is used, Luigi glances toward Raymond to call his attention to the slight imperfection.

LUIGI: Si? You see—what did I tell you? It is a good voice? I have improve' it, yes?

RAYMOND: Yes, it has improved. You have certainly improved. Addy—wonderfully.

ADELINA: Goodness sake, Jack, you act as if you were sorry. I think you're as mean as you can be! I sing my best to please you, and you sit there as if I'd been feeding you vinegar with a spoon. You're not even polite, Jack Raymond.

RAYMOND: If I could listen to your singing without thinking of what is to

come, no angel could sing sweeter—but into the enjoyment of it comes the thought, "All this is not for me. It's that she may stand in the glare of the footlights, listening to the praises of the people, while they feast their eyes on the purity that makes her worth the praises." Addy, a woman's place is home, with a man's love to protect her. This career is all a will-o'-the-wisp to lead you—I don't know where. Addy, no woman is happy without love.

ADELINA (*laughing*): That's right. The happiest woman is the one that men love, and who loves them—collectively—but laughs at them—individually.

RAYMOND (*starting for the door*): I think I'll be going.

ADELINA: What for? I only see you once a week—and sometimes not that often—and I miss you, Jack. Don't be angry. I love to have you come—

RAYMOND (*pleased*): Do you, Addy?

ADELINA: And have a good old-fashioned scrap. It wakes me up. Uncle won't quarrel with me, and Pietro (*Pietro stops playing*) when I start to fight with him, he goes to his studio and composes unutterable things and plays them at me. Don't you, Pietro? (*Pietro turns and looks hard at her.*) He is trying to think of something cutting to answer me with. Give him time. (*Pietro gives her look of disgust and turns back to piano.*) Isn't he delicious?



RAYMOND: If your voice hadn't come between us, you would have loved me that way, Addy. You have always been the one girl in the world for me, and I'm going to win you, Addy—I'm going to win you!

PIETRO (*to no one in particular, playing sulkily*): Some people make me tired!

Pietro's young piano pupil—one Anton Rubinstein—arrives, and from the heart-breaking sounds that soon issue from the adjoining room, it is evident that there is little in a name, and that poor Pietro earns in suffering his "fifty cents a lesson."

ADELINA (*to RAYMOND*): You ought to teach Pietro something of your hobby. He could try it on Anton.

RAYMOND: That's all right, Addy, laugh. But the more I learn of medi-



ADELINA: I'm going to marry uncle. LUIGI (*excited and embarrassed*): Non—non—I tell-a you. What you talk such foolish talk?

cine, the more I see the power of mental suggestion. Here in New York I find many of the older men—thinkers in medicine—have been using it for years.

ADELINA: I wonder if it isn't suggestion that makes so many people evil-minded? I wonder if it isn't mental suggestion that makes sewing circles in Azalia love scandal—perhaps?

RAYMOND: Sometimes people place themselves in a false position, which suggests scandal—as you are doing here.

ADELINA: In what way?

RAYMOND: Well, in the first place, this old man is not your uncle.

ADELINA: He is my mother's cousin—he was her friend.

RAYMOND: This boy is crazy, madly in love with you. His eyes devour you. He hates me because he thinks I'm his rival.

ADELINA (*quietly*): He is, as you say, a boy, and *thinks* he is in love with me, as he has been with two others since my arrival and will doubtless be with a dozen more after my departure.

RAYMOND: This whole thing is wrong—this whole free-and-easy atmosphere. It's in your veins and makes you careless, careless even of your good name.

ADELINA: Old friends are so delightful in their frankness! Is there anything else?

RAYMOND: Yes. If you were in Azalia, you wouldn't think of living in three rooms with two single men.

ADELINA: There's a nasty insult in what you say, and you ought to be ashamed to think it—let alone say it.

RAYMOND: I don't mean what I think. What would the people at home say?

ADELINA: They would probably say what you don't think. But that's Azalia. This is New York.

RAYMOND: Addy, is there no hope for me?

ADELINA: Please don't, Jack. You're a dear, good boy, and I like you, oh, lots! But not that way.

RAYMOND: If your voice hadn't come between us, you would have loved me that way, Addy. You've always been

the one girl in the world for me. (*Seizing her hand*) And I'm going to win you, Addy—I'm going to win you!

ADELINA: Jack, if you saw a friend of yours hammering his head against a stone wall, what would you do?

RAYMOND: Suppose you were to lose your voice—would you marry me then?

ADELINA (*laughing*): Well, if I ever lose my voice, and there's no one around I like better, I'll—think about it.

ADELINA (*playing piano*): Pietro, you remind me so much of a black Spanish rooster I had in Ohio. He always had a growl coming—nothing but trouble. His strutting was awful to behold. There was a piece of old mirror in the yard, and when he couldn't find anything else to growl about, he'd get in front of the mirror and growl at himself.

PIETRO: You know there's one thing



LUIGI: Why did he kill her? Nobody knows. Another fellow kill-a him before he can say. Who? Who should? The father of her boy.

Raymond gone, and Anton Rubinstein's lesson over, Pietro comes raging into the room.

PIETRO (*banging coin upon the table*): There's the filthy blood money! For that I must degrade myself, my music, my nerves, my art! Adelina, that boy will come here once too often, and they will hang me for it!

ADELINA: Poor Pietro!

PIETRO (*pacing angrily up and down*): Everything must have an end. There is a limit to even my patience. And I am patient—you know that, Adelina. Who are his parents? What are they, and why are they?

I like about you, Adelina. You're so damned sympathetic.

ADELINA: I'm going to practice. Please don't interrupt.

PIETRO: All right. (*Slight pause, then bolting out of chair*) I don't like that doctor, and he'll never make you happy!

ADELINA (*quietly*): Now, Pietro, don't you start making love to me again. I don't like it. I won't have it. I'm—I'm— Well, don't do it—that's all. (*Turns back to piano and plays and sings exercises and scales.*)

PIETRO (*downcast*): It breaks my heart the way you treat me, Adelina. If



LUIGI: Maybe the voice come back again—to-morrow—next week, yes, eh, Signor Doctor?

RAYMOND: I don't know.

you ever marry that doctor, and he don't treat you right, he'll answer to me—that's all!

But Adelina goes calmly on with her singing until Luigi comes in for her lesson. He is at once the stern, critical teacher, and, as Adelina says, the pupil is no longer his loving niece, but a voice. In the middle of a beautiful big tone, Adelina suddenly stops.

ADELINA: Uncle, I've just thought of something. How nearly are we related?

LUIGI: Well, my grandmadre was your mother's grandmadre's sister.

ADELINA: We're distant enough, so that's all right. Uncle, what is the best way for a girl to put a stop to a pair of persistent lovers whom she absolutely will not marry? The only way is to marry some one else. I'll get married to you!

LUIGI (*in amazement*): What? This is a very fine joke! You are crazy!

ADELINA: I'm not, uncle. Figure it out for yourself. All it means is you'll sign a life contract to teach me, and I'll sign one to darn your socks.

LUIGI (*getting worried*): But I no want-a get married! I get married once—that's enough. I tell-a you no. If I was as old as you think I am, maybe—but I am-a not, and I will-a not!

ADELINA: Yes, you will, uncle. It's all fixed.

LUIGI: No, I tell-a you! What you talk such foolish talk?

They are arguing when Pietro and Raymond return, Adelina's delight in teasing growing with Luigi's embarrassment. The two lovers receive her announcement rather coldly, but Pietro, at her request, plays an extravagant love song, "Youth's Appeal to Age," which she sings to the protesting Luigi with all the fervor and expression at her command. During the brilliant ca-

denza, Luigi, listening, forgets his annoyance and turns applauding to her.

Two weeks later, the curtain rises again upon the shabby old studio. Pietro is at the piano, working on a melody that afterward becomes his famous "Song of a Soul." Adelina has had the operation upon her throat, but not yet has she been allowed to speak. Busy with a bit of sewing, she sits across the table from Luigi.

LUIGI: This—a last week, since your operation, has been a grand one. So quiet—not a sound. Except Pietro composing— (*She writes on pad.*) *Si, "The Song of a Soul."* (*Both look at PIETRO, who is pounding out tremendous chords.*) It sounds like the song of a—what you call?—boiler factory. Pietro! Pietro! The song of a soul does not bust the piano!

PIETRO (*inspired*): Don't! Wait! (*Repeats words of song.*) "Every soul hath its song, its melody divine—rising to ecstasy—and so hath mine. Just let me sing my song divine, or I shall die of sorrow." (*Reaching for notes*) "Ecstasy—ecstasy!" (*Fails. Glares at words of song.*) Confound it!

LUIGI: He reaches for ecstasy—ecstasy—and gets "Confound it!"

PIETRO: I want to finish this one strain, Adelina, and then, when the doctor comes and says you can speak and can sing, I want you to try it. (*Plays, leading up to climax. Before he gets there, it collapses into a discord.*) No! No! If you could only sing this, Adelina, I could get it.

ADELINA, who is watching the clock,

writes question on slip of paper and hands it to LUIGI.)

LUIGI: Of course it is all right. The doctor, he say "one chance in a thousand." He might as well say one chance in a million. The Signor Doctor is a very fine fellow. He will not be pleased to hear that you have accepted an engagement and that we are going away. He loves you very much. (*She writes. He reads, angry.*) No, no! Don't you start that again, Adelina! You make-a me mad that time. The Signor Doctor would not speak to me—Pietro, he like to kill me—just 'cause you make a crazy, very bad joke. No, it is not funny at all. When you marry, do not do it without love—for love, Adelina, is the melody of marriage.

PIETRO (*at composition*): "Oh, let me sing my song divine!" If there was only another syllable in that line!



LUIGI (*alarmed*): Adelina! No—no—not-a that! Not-a that!



PIETRO: Where did you get the watch? LUIGI: Oh, I have a friend!

LUIGI (*nodding toward PIETRO*): He is a good boy! (*Sadly*) He looks very much like his mother. (*ADELINA looks at picture over mantel.*) Happy? *Si*, we were very happy at first. I love her, she love me—but she love admiration more. She want all men should love her. Not bad—just foolish. I no like. It hurts me here (*touching heart*).

What happened? Fellow kill her. No—not-a me. Why did he kill her? Nobody knows. Another fellow kill-a him before he can say. (*Under stress of emotion, picks up stiletto from table.*) Who? Who should? The father of her boy.

Pietro, in his efforts to complete the melody, tries to sing it. He sings in a

throaty, nasal tone, wandering off the key, singing loudly, while Adelina holds her ears and Luigi in agony cries "*Dia-zolla*—Pietro! Pietro! Do not! Do not! I beg of you!"

PIETRO (*disgusted and angry*): Now what is it? Is it possible for me to do anything to please anybody? Everything I do is wrong. If I try to compose something gay, laughing, Adelina tells me I have no depth. If I try to do something serious, a big thought—you talk of boiler factories and busting pianos!

LUIGI: If the bad temper is a sign of genius, Pietro, some day you will write a masterpiece.

PIETRO: There you go! Now it's my bad temper! (*Rising angrily*) It's no use! You drive it all out of my head! It's all gone! Music—melody—cannot live in an atmosphere like this! Oh, if I were only surrounded by souls in sympathy with me!

LUIGI: Oh, souls in sympathy!

Impatiently the silent, smiling Adelina opens the door for Raymond when he at last arrives to examine her throat. He is obviously somewhat nervous.

RAYMOND: I might have been here earlier, but Doctor King sailed to-day. You know he told you he was going away. He was a little worried about you.

LUIGI: There is no—

RAYMOND: Oh, no—but there's nothing absolutely sure in surgery. One chance in a thousand for this operation to go wrong, but we must always be prepared for the possibility of that one chance. My instructions are: Examine the throat, and if there are no signs of inflammation, spray it, and the patient may speak. After five minutes, spray the throat again, and the patient may try to sing. If everything is all right, the voice should be clearer and stronger than ever.

The preliminary treatment over, Adelina bursts into delighted speech, her words fairly "bumping into one another," as Luigi says. Suddenly Pietro dashes back toward the piano.

PIETRO (*melodramatically*): Wait—wait! Everybody keep still! I get it!

(*Plays climax to "Song of a Soul" and turns to them triumphantly.*)

ADELINA (*smiling, but nervous*): Pietro, don't do anything like that again. I'm that nervous—I thought—I didn't know I could get so nervous!

RAYMOND: The thought that you might not recover your voice would naturally make you very nervous.

ADELINA: Jack, I want to thank you for all you have done and are doing. I know it must be terribly hard for you to do this, because, although it means everything to me, my everything doesn't include you, except as my very good friend! (*Holds out her hand*)

RAYMOND: Don't thank me yet, Addy. Suppose, after all, you couldn't—

Luigi and Pietro break in with toasts to Adelina and her future success as a prima donna. Raymond is then informed of the wonderful offer from an old friend of Luigi's, now an impresario, to star Adelina in opera in South America, and to take Luigi along as stage manager.

RAYMOND (*with jaws square and set*): Why wasn't I told of this?

ADELINA: We were, or rather I was, a little afraid that I might be the one in a thousand—

RAYMOND: It's always well to be prepared. You never can tell.

LUIGI (*in ecstasy*): South America! The Latin country where the cold wind, he never blows, where the snow, he never freezes the feet, where the flowers always bloom—where they love divinely and hate like the devil—I shall see you again!

ADELINA: Oh, it must be great!

RAYMOND: Yes, splendid—for yellow fever, malaria, typhoid, and every other disease that lazy, slothful people always have with them.

LUIGI: Well, you cannot expect everything.

When Adelina is ready to try to sing Pietro's "*Song of a Soul*," Luigi sternly insists upon the scales first—to warm the vocal cords. All watch her rather nervously. She strikes the first note, but does not run the scale. She tries again, but succeeds only in striking the first and final, upper note.

LUIGI: You do not take the breath? Why don't you sing?

ADELINA: Yes, I did, uncle. I can't sing. My throat seems asleep.

LUIGI: What's-a matter with you? Play, Pietro. (*To ADELINA*) Do not-a make the joke!

ADELINA (*beginning to realize*): I can't sing, uncle. One in a thousand—and I'm that one!

LUIGI (*alarmed*): I tell-a you no! It cannot be! The Signor Doctor, he say— It cannot be! Doctor, spray the throat again—do something! My God—no, no!

RAYMOND: It will not help.

ADELINA (*to RAYMOND*): You knew this when you examined my throat. That's why you were so nervous—that's why your hands were so cold! Why didn't you tell me then? Why did you let me think— No, it isn't so! I can sing. Play, Pietro, play!

But each effort seems more futile than the last. Poor Luigi is in an agony of despair.

ADELINA: Jack—do something for me! Tell me—am I the "one in a thousand?"

RAYMOND: God forgive me—yes.

ADELINA: What have I done to deserve this? Have I neglected my talents? Have I sinned so grievously that I must be punished? Where is divine mercy? Is this it? "One in a thousand"—I don't believe it! Play, Pietro, your "Song of a Soul," and my soul will sing it. I'm greater than fate! I'll rise above it! (*She tries again, but the voice refuses to sing the melody.*) I can't sing now, Pietro, but I will! I'll start all over again. I'll spend a lifetime in practice. (*Then, desperately, turning to RAYMOND*) I can't sing! It's all over!

RAYMOND (*coming close to her*): There are other things in life, Addy. There is happiness and success as great as the one you have lost.

ADELINA: Not for me. There is nothing else.

After Raymond leaves, the others sit dumb with horror at the tragedy. Then Pietro tears in pieces the manuscript of his "Song of a Soul." It is Adelina's

song, and it will never be sung. He tries to say something comforting, but words choke him, and in an agony of grief, he turns and dashes out of the room. Adelina is beyond tears.

LUIGI (*trying to keep from breaking down*): *Carissima*, do not try to keep the tears back. Let them come—they will ease the heart. Don't sit staring that way, or you will go mad. Cry out—cry out! If you do not, you will break my heart.

ADELINA: I can't cry—yet, uncle.

Alone at last, Adelina stumbles over to the piano and once more tries to sing the scales, but fails. Slowly, as the thought comes to her of escape from pain, she reaches for the stiletto upon the table. But Luigi suddenly opens the door, and cries, "No—no—not-a that! Not-a that!"

ADELINA (*as if weary with suffering, dropping stiletto*): No—that would be a coward's way. I'll fight it out!

Six months later, the curtain rises upon Adelina's wedding day. Pietro is at the piano, playing a nuptial march that he has written for the occasion.

LUIGI (*listening*): *Si*—very good, but I never see the use of music at a wedding. The two for who it is played have music more beautiful to listen to. It is the song of joy here. (*Hands over heart.*)

PIETRO (*sadly*): I suppose so. I'll never hear that song of joy now. *She* is going to marry *him*.

LUIGI (*with mock sadness*): I feel very sorry for you, Pietro. But, without the joke, the pain that is imagined is a hurt just as much as the one that *is*, the one you really have-a not got—the one you only think you have.

Luigi glances at the disorderly table covered with soiled breakfast dishes. Pietro had promised to wash them for Adelina while she went to the station with Jack to meet his father and sister.

PIETRO: I forgot! How do you expect a fellow to think of dishes when his heart is breaking?

LUIGI: He forgot! (*Snapping fingers*) That for such a love! Santa Maria—he forgot! The last promise he



ADELINA: Do I look good enough for a bride?

make to the girl he love—maybe the last thing he can do for her—he forgot!

Pietro's hot-headed anger suddenly subsides at the recollection of the wedding march that he himself is to play upon the church organ.

LUIGI (*embracing him*): It makes you very happy, my boy? Pietro, if I

make fun of you sometimes when you get-a mad; you must not take notice. All the time I love you very much.

PIETRO (*a little pleadingly*): You don't mind if I'm bad-tempered, do you, father?

LUIGI: No, my son. You come by your bad temper honestly.

PIETRO (*smiling at him*): Yes, I guess I do.

LUIGI: *Si*. Your mother's family were what you call the cranks.

Adelina at length comes hurrying in, laden with parcels, to find father and son washing and drying dishes in a highly artistic manner. Pietro is busy dodging Luigi's gesticulations with the dishcloth, while the latter discusses love, inspiration, suffering, music, happiness. Adelina does not approve and merrily insists upon finishing the dishes herself while she sends Luigi off to get ready.

ADELINA: Don't worry about me. I made up my mind a long time ago that, if I ever married, I wouldn't do like most girls I've known—get ready about three hours ahead of time, and then worry myself to death for fear the bridegroom would be run over or the church fall down. You go ahead. I'll be ready. Did you get your suit pressed?

LUIGI: *Si*. Rubinstein, he make a very nice job. It-a look like new. How much you think I pay to fix up that suit? (*Proudly*) Nothing! I promise Rubinstein Pietro will give his son Anton three lessons for nothing. (*Pietro gasps.*) That's a fine scheme, *si*? (*Exits, much pleased with himself.*)

PIETRO (*disgusted and angry*): Can you beat it? It's no wonder we're poor! Three fifty-cent music lessons for a seventy-five-cent tailor's job! I won't stand for it—and I'll tell him so!

ADELINA: Don't scold him to-day—don't scold him ever, Pietro. Your father's the best father any boy ever had—the only real father I ever had—and to-day I'm going to leave him.

PIETRO (*quietly*): Yes, and you're going to leave me, too. I love you, Adelina.

ADELINA: Of course you do. And you're going to keep on loving me until you meet the real girl and find the real love. I hope that when you do meet her, she won't be a genius. You have genius enough for one family. What you need is an anchor—to hold you near the earth long enough to get your dreams down in black and white.

PIETRO: Why didn't you marry me?

ADELINA: I want to fly myself. My wings are clipped, but still I want to fly, and I need a strong anchor myself.

Pietro sighs deeply and sits at the piano. Striking desultory chords, unconsciously he drifts into "The Song of a Soul." Adelina, busy straightening the room, stands for a moment suffering before she cries out, "Pietro—please—don't!"

When Raymond arrives, Adelina greets him fondly, her face lighting up with pleasure at the exquisite bridal bouquet he brings her.

RAYMOND (*nervous and worried*): I wish it were all over, Addy! If I should lose you now—

ADELINA: Oh, is that it? Don't worry, Mr. Doctor Raymond. I'll never let you lose me now. (*Laughs and pats his cheek.*)

RAYMOND (*almost crushing her in his arms*): Say that again, Addy!

And then Luigi enters in all his glory, dressed for the wedding. With his ancient Prince Albert and gray trousers, the high silk hat that has not been worn for eighteen years, the tan shoes that for twenty-five cents have been turned into a beautiful, dressy black, and a manner that befits the grandeur of his attire, the shabby old music master is barely recognizable.

LUIGI: How you like? Rubinstein make a fine job, eh? See—you cannot see one of the holes the moth did make.

ADELINA: Magnificent!

LUIGI: Pietro, will you come? We go have a glass of cognac. No? Well, if you will all excuse me, I will go give the people a treat. Let them see Signor Luigi Golfanti, primo baratonni a Scalta, Theater de la Scala de Milano. I will return. (*Salutes and marches grandly out.*)

Adelina is pleased when Pietro, smiling a little sadly, approaches Raymond.

PIETRO: You're all right, doctor. I mean you must be all right to win Adelina. You and I haven't been the best of friends, have we? I've been nasty to you at times, but I'm sorry for it. (*They clasp hands.*) I hope you'll both be very, very happy.



RAYMOND: I shall always be waiting and hoping—whether you prove you are right—even if you prove I am right. I love you, and I shall be waiting.

ADELINA: That was nice, Pietro, manly, and I'm proud of you. (PIETRO squeezes her hand, smiles bravely, and exits.)

RAYMOND: Addy, suppose your voice should come back after we're married?

ADELINA: When we kneel at the altar and I give you my word, Jack, nothing will ever make me change it.

Dressed at last in her simple white wedding gown, Adelina comes out to Luigi, who for a little does not attempt

to hide the sadness in his heart—sadness at parting with the pupil of whom he has grown so fond.

ADELINA: When I think of all these happy days, uncle—I—I can't—

LUIGI: *Si*—happy days. Too bad the miserable ones had to come, too.

ADELINA: Even they, in time, will become nothing but a beautiful memory of your kindness. Sometimes I dream it never was that awful night, and I am at a beautiful theater. I walk out on



LUIGI: I tell-a you—you love-a him—and life without love is nothing. You love-a him, and you will forgive.

the stage, and I see before me a sea of faces, and the orchestra crashes out the opening chords of—what do you think, uncle? Pietro's "Song of the Soul." I sing the song, my voice rising higher and stronger than ever, my soul speaking to theirs through song. It is over—the audience sends forth

a roar of applause. I bow, they continue, then I leave the stage and return, holding by the hand my teacher—Luigi Golfanti. There is a hush as I tell them, "It is he who is the master. I am only the pupil."

LUIGI: But it is only in dreams that pupils do that for their teachers.

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During all these months, Adelina, under Raymond's orders, has been using a spray upon her throat, which still seems to be "asleep," but recently she has neglected it.

ADELINA: I've given up all hope of ever singing, uncle. I haven't tried lately. It hurts too much. It's like a piano with a delayed action. It strikes the key, but I must wait for the tone. When I try to connect the tones—

She suddenly tries to run the scale. To her great amazement, she sings it perfectly, her voice sounding true and clear. She stands for a moment, unable to realize. Then she scales again, and Luigi is in an ecstasy of joy. Again and again her voice rings out with a beauty and warmth it never had before.

ADELINA (*in quiet ecstasy*): I can sing, uncle, I can sing! (*Turning to PIETRO and JACK as they enter*) I can sing, Jack, I can sing! Play, Pietro, play your "Song of a Soul!" I'm so happy! Isn't it glorious?

RAYMOND: The taxi is waiting to take us to the church. It isn't too late. If it's your voice, now is the time to speak. Think, Addy, think!

ADELINA (*getting her coat*): Don't let me think, Jack—take me.

RAYMOND (*suffering deeply*): Addy, if you knew that I caused the loss of your voice, would you come with me?

ADELINA: I'd say you couldn't do such a thing.

RAYMOND (*wringing it out*): Well, I did. Now will you come with me?

ADELINA: Yes, for I don't believe it.

RAYMOND: It's the truth. Doctor King told me you would not sing well until the vocal chord he operated on had worked into harmony with the others. I did not tell you this. I led you to believe the success or failure of the operation would show at the first trial of the voice. That night you were in a highly nervous condition. You took my suggestion—anticipating failure. You tried your voice; it did not respond as you expected. The mental shock did the rest. The suggested failure became an accomplished fact. The spraying since has had nothing to do

with it. It has been only the constant reminder or suggestion of the failure.

ADELINA: But why did you do this?

RAYMOND: I felt your voice was calling you away from me—away from me forever. I did it to save you, Addy, from a life that less than ten women in a hundred go through unsmirched.

ADELINA (*quietly*): Did you think I couldn't be one of the ten? Who are you that you should judge? What right had you to save me?

RAYMOND: I love you.

ADELINA: You love yourself. You wanted me—and didn't care how you got me. And all the time you were so kind—so comforting, you were the cause of all my suffering! With a word you could have stopped it. And you would have married me with this lie in your heart—and I would have gone through life with a cheat—a man who had tricked me into marrying him! Well, why didn't you go through with it? Why did you tell me now?

RAYMOND: Because I felt your voice was still more to you than my love could ever be. Is this the end, Addy?

ADELINA: For me it is the beginning.

RAYMOND: I shall always be waiting and hoping—whether you prove you are right—even if you prove I am right. I love you, and I shall be waiting. (*Exits.*)

ADELINA: Now let me sing. Play, Pietro—"The Song of a Soul."

LUIGI (*listening to the beautiful voice, then interrupting*): Stop—he has-a done it! He has given you what you needed! It is-a love! You love-a him! It shows in your voice!

ADELINA: I hate him—and hate has done it!

LUIGI: I tell-a you you love-a him, and you will forgive.

ADELINA: Did you?

LUIGI: Yes—my wife she kill-a my ambition, she laugh at my love, but see! Here at my heart is her picture. You will forgive, too.

ADELINA: When I have proved I am one of the ten—maybe. But now, Pietro, your "Song of a Soul." I must sing or die!

CURTAIN.

FLORA MARTIN'S PARIS WAIST



by Dorothy Culver Mills

Author of "Something Different," "My Day in Court," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

In which Fate uses an odd instrument to help open the love-blinded eyes of Stephen Wells.

WHAT do you suppose it's really, truly like, Stephen?"

The childish question plashed a stone into the glazed pool of Stephen's abstraction. Startled, he withdrew his stare from the solid regiments of New Jersey cities that guard the approach to New York. Opposite him, little Rose Cross, with shining, eager face, was leaning against the Pullman window, her eyes reaching forward as if to outstrip the train.

"Oh, I don't know," he replied vaguely. "They talk about it a lot, but I guess, if you take Indianapolis and Terre Haute and multiply 'em by several hundred, you have the answer."

He, also, was on his first trip to New York, but he had given little thought to the city. He lived beyond the great circle that dwells entirely in the shadow of those tall buildings standing in serried ranks like tall lozenges on end. He could get along without New York. New York was to him only the place that held Genevieve Quest, who had visited Lindalia last May. It was now October.

"I'm coming next fall," he had told her.

"You'll hate it," she had drawled with a lazy indifference. "It's not your sort."

"Then it's not yours, either," he had made idiotic and emphatic reply.

As she had shrugged and laughed, he had never felt more keenly the charm of her aloofness, her grace, her tawny hair and eyes, and the rich color pulsing in her cheeks.

But Rose's clear young voice was answering him:

"Aunt Hattie says not. She says I'll find it something I've never been able to imagine. She says we'll have scrumptious times at cafés and theaters and things. I hope I don't get homesick!"

"Homesick in all that giddiness?" He smiled indulgently. "Your Aunt Hattie will see to that!"

"You can't tell; I'm such a goose," she sighed. "When I was quite little, we went to visit my cousin in Louisville in an apartment. And it was so strange, with the upstairs and downstairs all on one floor, that I howled and howled, till they borrowed a black kitten from a neighbor, because I had one at home. Then I was all right, because something was familiar."

"We'll have to get a black kitten," he teased, really observing her for a moment; she was a fine youngster and getting astonishingly pretty. "Say, Wildrose, how many candles was it that last birthday?"

She flushed as her gray eyes met his with a sober directness that baffled him a little.

"I was nineteen last week," she said quietly.

"You're growing up," he commented.

"Yes—I'm growing up—Stephen."

Again he felt a fleeting sense of discomfort. But as she turned to the window once more, his thoughts fled back to Genevieve.

Upon alighting at the station, she spoke anxiously:

"I hope Aunt Hattie is here."

"I've chaperoned you so far," he replied. "I'll see that you reach her safely."

"You—you'll be seeing Miss Quest," she added hurriedly in a low voice. "Please give her my regards."

While he was promising, they described her aunt, a large woman who radiated good nature and an excellent income. With Rose tucked affectionately upon her arm, she asked him to call. Detecting a slight wistfulness in the girl's face that he laid to fear of homesickness, he accepted hurriedly, as he sped them on their way; Genevieve had said that he would get in in time to drop down for tea, and it was nearly five.

He swiftly visioned tea with her—just the two of them; probably cushions and candles; and Genevieve in some swathing, clinging garment such as she always wore. He postponed settling at a hotel, checked his bag, and entered a taxicab.

"That's down near Fourteenth Street," volunteered the driver, as he repeated the number.

Her Fifth Avenue address impressed Stephen's fiction-reared Middle-West fancy. He knew that she lived alone in a studio apartment and that she was a sculptress. She must work hard and be getting good prices to afford Fifth Avenue, he thought, as inordinately proud of her talent as he was inordi-

nately ignorant of art. In the slow progress through the cluttered cross-town streets, he began to realize how little he knew about her. She was simply Genevieve Quest, who, having been ill and needing a rest and change, had spent a month in Lindalia last spring with cousins who had just moved there.

Further than that he knew nothing—except that she was the first woman who had ever profoundly moved him. He was stirred by her silences, by the rare depths in her brief contralto sentences, by her every movement. Because she had piqued and challenged him, he had thought of her continuously ever since; and while he had been thinking of her continuously, he had quite naturally associated her with the jumble of ill-defined dreams that constituted his very normal young masculine notion of marriage.

They turned to the right into what he knew must be Fifth Avenue; then, as he kept wheeling past stores and shops into a district of more scantily peopled sidewalks and occasional wholesale houses, he grew puzzled; and when the machine finally stopped in front of the address he had given, he was frowning his unbelief. But a glance at her last letter verifying the number beyond doubt, he dismissed the cab and halted on the curb in miserable bewilderment.

He was standing opposite the Gladwyn Lunch, its exterior an affair of plate glass with white-enameled menus, its interior rows of chairs with leg-o'-mutton sleeves. When an unshaven man emerged, wiping his mouth with his fist, Stephen hastily lifted his eyes to the second floor, whose arched windows, even in the dusk, blazed with the unmistakable gilt of the Reisenblum Kid Glove Factory. The windows on the two higher floors were bleakly blank. They might have seemed to him the staring, sightless eyes of the once splendid mansion, whose spirit had fled; instead, he merely wondered which was

hers. His gaze fell again, searching till it found a narrow black cavern beside the entrance to the Gladwyn Lunch. Upon investigation, he saw Genevieve's card in one of a cluster of black letter boxes.

He started grimly up the steep, dirty stairs, was assaulted by a din of machinery pouring through the open doors of the glove factory, and finally reached a door at the front of the top floor, where he found Genevieve's card again. A shout of masculine laughter within sickened him still further.

She opened to his knock and stood there smiling her welcome—a tall, slender figure draped in velvety white, with vivid cheeks and bright hair; and girl and welcome swam in an acrid haze from many cigarettes, against a jumble of male figures heaped on a huge divan against the side wall.

"You're just in time, Stephen," her rich voice drawled, with a friendly unconcern that took no note of the miles and months that lay between this meeting and their last. But the brief clasp of her warm, tense hand, its back a little clay chapped from her work—a hand at odds with her languor and hinting at fires smoldering within—thrilled him as always.

She introduced him and proceeded to pour his tea, which she heavily braced with whisky. Then he was forgotten, except for an occasional comradely smile from her—but he noticed that she smiled on all impartially, and spoke little.

They were a Madonna-faced tenor, a Hebrew socialist, a pretty young boy who wrote sophisticated stories for a syndicate, and a blond and extraordi-



"You're just in time, Stephen," her rich voice drawled, ing and

narly profane illustrator who could not pronounce r. Stephen understood little of what they were driving at in their gossip, cynical, uncensored, hideously clever; but he heard the things they said, and that was enough for him. They all seemed entirely at home in this big room, with its assortment of faded chairs, a round table with a huge oil lamp that sent a dim, rosy light struggling through the haze, a desk, some wall cases holding small plaster figures,



with a friendly unconcern that took no note of the miles and months that lay between this meeting and their last.

and, under an arch leading to a rear alcove, a tall stand with the bust of a man.

Stephen was dazed. He was undoubtedly here in this room, and that was undoubtedly Genevieve across from him, the complacent center of this swirl of wild talk and smoke and whisky tea. Yet at the same moment he seemed to be driving her through that last sweet May night of moon and stars, when she had murmured wistfully

of simple things, such as a yellow light streaming through a farmhouse window. That was surely the true Genevieve.

A great anger kindled in him against these men who betrayed her generous hospitality. She was too sweet, too impressionable, too sensitive to her surroundings; and this revelation of her weakness made her all the dearer because she needed his protection. He ached to toss the whole divanful of men

down the steep, dirty stairs to break their several necks.

Instead, he helplessly accompanied them when, without interval or parley, the group moved to a place somewhere on the other side of Washington Square for dinner. The coarse white fur that Genevieve swung over her white dress made her more outrageously beautiful than ever, but he saw that it did not keep her warm, and he could scarcely keep from whispering to her that she need never be cold again, that he was there now.

His later recollections of that evening were never clear. His fever of mounting anger and disgust was a physical pain that blurred his senses while it tortured them. Impossible food and more impossible speech, in a basement bedlam of clatter and chatter and dirt, prefaced a local performance of one-act plays that made him wince for the unconcerned girl at his side. Still later, he was dragged to a neighborhood club, where the illustrator who could not pronounce *r*, his tongue wagging from wine, sidled him into a corner to tell him the involved private lives of the celebrities present. Finally he began on the tangled escapades of the baggy-kneed novelist who was talking to Genevieve across the room. At that moment, with a violence that he had not suspected of himself, Stephen broke away, seized her, and was at last alone with her, hurrying her through the gusty streets.

He well knew the only sentences that would come when his lips once opened; so he waited till they were back in the studio, with the uneven wick of the just-lighted lamp flickering odd shadows through its queer, raveling shade of rose color. Then he gripped her to him.

"I can't stand it! I'm going to carry you out of this right away!" he whispered hoarsely. "Even if you don't care just yet—I'll make you! And you mustn't stay in such a hell another day! My God, is this New York? In Lin-

dalia, the air's clean and the food's clean and the talk's clean. I promise to make you happy—and keep you warm—and you'll be safe!" He clasped her convulsively.

She sighed with a weary composure that chilled him.

"Let me go, Stephen. It's very late, and I'm very tired."

"Not till you promise," he replied obstinately.

"Please, dear boy," she urged. "And come back at ten to-morrow morning." A brief pity darkened her eyes as she saw the disappointment in his.

But she had called him "dear," so he had the courage to leave her. Also, on that shifting foundation, before he slept, he built him a house and a garage, and the room over the garage was a studio where she could potter to her heart's content. The next morning, while dressing, he at some expense installed an electric dishwasher.

He blinked a moment when she greeted him at ten. Last night clad all in white, this morning she was a slender black torch flaming in the sunlight. Then he laid his hands on her shoulders and with an unsteady laugh cried:

"What train shall we take?"

"You can't make love to me till eleven," she replied deliberately. "You may then—if you still want to. I overslept and haven't straightened up much yet. You may help me. It's a job I hate."

He became instantly practical.

"All right. But let's hurry and get it done."

"I suppose some day I may get around to mending this," she remarked, as she brought her divan into existence by spreading over her made bed a cover of alternate strips of black velvet and purple moiré, ripping to betray a red blanket underneath. "And these pillows are disgusting!" She indicated a variety of stains marring the rose and violet silks.

But he was not listening. He was looking down with anxiety at a number of moth-eaten fur rugs whose hairs were scattered thickly over whatever portions of the ill-painted rough boards their hides did not conceal. Without ever considering the matter, he had supposed floors were always polished and shiny like his own at home. But then his mother was famous for keeping house better, with less effort, than any woman in Lindalia.

"If you'll give me something, I'll brush up this floor," he offered.

"Oh, never mind that," she replied easily. "It'll be just as bad to-morrow."

He reluctantly turned his helpfulness elsewhere.

"I can dust a bit then, if you'll give me a cloth. I never have, but I guess I can," for his hand had inadvertently closed over a chair back unpleasantly gritty with Fifth Avenue and clay particles.

"Very well—and I'll read my letter. Then we'll do dishes."

She handed him an old stocking. After a clumsy, but successful, engagement with the chairs, he turned to the table. It presented a medley—a tooled-leather book and some art catalogues, a jar of cheese, a pair of stockings, a green plaster Buddha holding incense, and a metal paper knife whose stickiness from some alien service was overgrown with grime. He lifted amused eyes to the girl sitting at the window, but she was absorbed in her letters, her slim, black-draped figure turned from him and leaning in exquisite curves against the back of the chair. He conscientiously returned to his task. When he came to the paper knife, he laid it aside to add to the dishes. Methodically he reached the lamp last.

As he bent over it, he saw that the shade, curiously rippling and ragged on the lower edge, and patterned oddly with amethyst beads, was very unnecessarily buttoned up the back with a

row of small pearl buttons and button-holes in excellent repair. He was still staring at it, trying to recall other lamp shades that he had known—he had never considered lamp shades before, but it distinctly seemed to him that they did not usually button up the back—when Genevieve glanced up.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Why the buttons?" he demanded.

"Oh," she replied with indifference, "that's the neck and shoulders of Flora Martin's Paris waist, made kimono style. It tones so beautifully, I deviled her till she gave it to me."

He laughed as she returned to her mail. Then, his hands in his pockets, he contemplated it again. He did not analyze his feelings, but some ancestral conservatism, some well-defined sense of fitness, was jarred. Lamp shades were lamp shades, and women's waists were women's waists, and he might be a darned ass, but hanged if he liked the idea! It implied all sorts of topsyturveydom—sort of a symbol. His eyes questioningly sought Genevieve once more; but as they fell on the drooping, sunlit figure, the swift desire to rush over and crush her in his arms overpowered him, scattering his momentary doubts.

At that moment she thrust aside her letters and rose.

"Come on," she yawned frankly. "I've got to do my dishes now, if I don't want my next meal to be a Mad Hatter's tea party. They're every one of them dirty."

He followed her through the arch into her workroom—where he had noticed a pedestal supporting a tall mass wrapped in cloth, and a bucket on the floor beside it—then, at right angles, through a second arch into a small, square space about the size of his mother's pantry, lit from above by a skylight. He looked around him with a curiosity that developed through amazement into indignation.



He lifted amused eyes to the girl sitting at the window, but she was absorbed in her letters.

"To-day's the last day you'll try to exist in a hole like this!" he promised belligerently. "I'm going to take care of you from now on!"

She surveyed it with interest.

"It is a sort of potpourri, isn't it? I suppose it does shock you after your mother's home in Lindalia. You know you're very like your mother, Stephen," she added, with apparent irrelevance.

On the wall facing him hung a small mirror, above a ledge holding an intimate confusion of toilet articles liberally sprinkled with face powder. High on either side of it were shelves, with hooks underneath that held clothes. The shelves did unsystematized service

shelves, which, filled at the rear with pots and pans, cereal boxes and tinned foods, at the front were stacked with shapely soiled cups and saucers of thin china in a beautiful dull green. On the floor in front stood a basin with tea and coffee grounds, squeezed slices of lemon, and an egg shell.

Genevieve donned a variegated apron that had once been white, emptied the contents of the basin into a galvanized can in the hall, dragged out the flat-topped trunk for a dish rack, thrust into Stephen's hand an enormous length of damp cheesecloth, filled her largest saucepan with tepid water, and proceeded to the dishes with the tight-lipped dispatch of a good hater.

as linen closet, medicine chest, wine cellar, laundry bag, bureau drawer, storage room, and china closet. There seemed nothing left to keep in the old trunk on the floor beneath, which was interfering with some very dusty skirts whose hems lay on its lid.

In the corner at his left was the smallest stationary washstand he had ever seen, its bowl a river system of cracks, its ledge an archipelago of dried brown soapsuds and ink spots. A tiny shelf above it held tooth paste, cocoa, and insect powder.

In the corner at his right, a two-burner gas stove stood on top of a couple of deep

The day before, Stephen could not have described his own home, for he had lived with it all his life as unconsciously as he had lived with his own soul. But in the next few moments, he became poignantly aware of it—of the fragrance of cedar and lavender in the cool closets filled with shelves of white linen; of the pantry shining with glass doors and glistening oilcloth; of the big kitchen, pleasantly precise and as speckless as an operating room; of his mother, in a starched enveloping apron chosen for its becoming shade of blue, moving about competently, humming a song. That was the real thing; this was some third-rate stage comedy he was witnessing. People didn't actually live like this. The evil enchantment was holding him as speechless as the girl.

But he broke it with a sudden exclamation:

"There's a red ant on that shelf!" He squashed it with the distaste of his training. "Bothered with many of them?"

"They don't do any harm; they're friendly little creatures," she replied.

Stephen was still struggling with this point of view when she declared herself through. He looked at his watch as she led him back to the front room and placed herself among the pillows on the divan. It showed half a minute of eleven. He sat down beside her and gently took her hand.

"I'm going to take you away from this morning, too, dear, as well as from last night," he began softly, with an effort at restraint. "I don't see how you've stood it even for your sculpture. You won't have to give that up. You can go on with it back there."

"What makes you think I want to marry you and live in Lindalia?" she asked curiously.

His startled eyes questioned her.

"Has it ever occurred to you that I may like living this way?"

He recoiled.

"Now we can talk sense," she said, reaching for a cigarette.

"Don't!" he cried.

"All right. But I can think better with one."

"That's why," he muttered. "They're doing something to you—those damned human gargoyles of last night! You're not the same——"

"Those damned human gargoyles" happen to be my friends." She drew away from him and settled deeper into the cushions. "And I like them as well as I like you. That hurts, doesn't it? You understand that I am refusing you unconditionally. But I'm going to favor you as most young ladies do not favor the young men they reject. Most young ladies see to it that the rejected young men are more in love with them than ever, but when you leave me this morning, you'll be relieved that you're not going to marry me, and grateful to me for curing you."

"Dear, please!" he protested.

She disregarded the interruption.

"You've never been in love before, and you've always dreamed of getting married," she began in the limpid tones of textbook analysis. "You've pictured yourself in a regular Lindalia honeymoon home—pink candles, doilies, blue morning dress opposite you at breakfast, evenings of bridge with the neighbors or quiet ones at home stretched before the fireplace in a patent rocker, reading to your wife while she sews, perhaps the *World's Work* or Robert Service's poems——"

She smiled wicked as he winced here.

"I thought so," she almost chuckled.

"Then you met me, and I stirred you. And because you wanted to kiss me more badly than you had ever wanted to kiss any other girl, you decided—with no investigation whatever—that I fitted into that picture. Now answer me honestly. Can you see me humming around a Lindalia kitchen, happy be-

cause I'm making a rice pudding with plenty of raisins in it for your dinner?"

"If you cared——" he muttered doggedly.

"You know you're talking nonsense," she retorted. "You don't really believe that, either, but you won't admit it. Again, now—can you see me?"

After a miserable pause, he shook his head in a faint negative.

"You see there's not one feature of the whole program that I don't thoroughly detest. I detest Lindalia! I can't breathe in its smug civic pride and its deadly provincial sanity. I——"

He seized her wrists and broke in violently:

"All this is folly! I've been mad to let you go on! Everything would get adjusted if you only loved me! There's another man——"

Her voice did not alter.

"Whether there's another man or not has nothing to do with it. If there was, I should not confess it to you. To parade another man would cure some, but it would not cure you; you would wrap yourself all the more stubbornly in your infatuation and consider yourself permanently heartbroken.

"The entire point is that *I love all this*—everything that you want to save me from.

"I love my New York. (Everybody has his own; there are a thousand New Yorks.) I can breathe in it. I love every half-baked enthusiast, every half-cocked experimentalist, every fool woman that bobs her hair to defy society, every fool man that thinks clean fingernails a menace to socialism—all the shortsighted couples that regard the marriage ceremony as a quaint relic. They're a seething crowd of grown-up children constantly dressing up in make-believe. And they're as self-important and self-deceived and fantastic and futile—and as lovable and genuine—as costumed children. I can take care of myself among them, never fear.

"Now it takes a great deal of money or a great deal of time to dress decently in New York. I haven't the money and I won't waste the time. I can't afford to be in style, and I can't afford to be out of it—so I just sidestep it. I make all my dresses the same way over a model I designed for myself. I can make one in a morning. I'm not always warm or dry and practically never appropriate, but I'm always good looking; so I manage to keep enough men in a good enough humor to buy me enough square meals to let me afford to stay on here."

Stephen shuddered, and she laughed. "You needn't worry," she told him dryly. "I'm 'good'—as the saying goes. But I'm not a good sculptor—though Heaven-knows I once thought I was—and the occasional sale of some damned, dimky book ends and plaster plaques won't keep me alive, even with my father's life insurance.

"To resume: It's with the other things as it is with clothes. I haven't the money, and I won't waste the time, to keep clean and in order. Life is too absorbing. And—listen carefully, Stephen, for this is what I've been leading up to all morning—I *don't mind the dirt!* It doesn't disturb me in the very least!"

Her heavy italics fell on ears that were listening in spite of themselves. Genevieve was violently refusing to identify herself with his dreams, and he was growing obscurely aware that his dreams were perhaps even dearer to him than the girl. But he was faint with a sense of loss, for by refusing to fit into his future, she seemed to be robbing him of it as well as of herself. There wasn't much left—not even the quixotic impulse to protect her, for he was increasingly impressed with the fact that she was quite able to direct her own life.

He made no sign. She studied his dispirited droop.



"What makes you think I want to marry you and live in Lindalia?" she asked curiously.

"I know, Stephen," she said with unexpected tenderness. "It's—hell not to have the woman you want. But that's just it," she recovered briskly. "You don't want me. You want some one else. You're a normal man and you want a normal girl."

"Now you're attractive; you're the kind of man that discriminating normal girls want to kiss and darn socks for, and I haven't a doubt that there's one back in Lindalia who may care for you already, and whose program of marriage is identical with yours down to the rice pudding. Go back and look around. And don't forget the youngsters just beginning to put their hair up. You can often catch 'em young and train 'em in."

Again he was listening in spite of himself. And at her last words, unbidden, the face of little Rose Cross glowed

for an instant before his closed eyes, bringing an odd, substantial comfort.

"Now run along back home," she commanded, as she rose and stretched. "I'm busy."

He lifted his eyes as she walked over to the wrapped figure in the rear room and began to unwind the cloth. A final intolerable rebellion possessed him as he watched her. He strode after her and seized her and kissed her again and again. Passive, she made no move. Her indifference quelled his rioting pulses. The girl he had dreamed of holding in his arms was warm and responsive, meeting his need with her own.

"Doesn't it make any difference at all to you that my arms are around you?" he demanded dully.

"No," she answered with a great weariness. "I half wish it did."

In a flash, he sensed some vast loneliness deep below her poise.

"You're not happy—and there's some one you care for," he stated quietly. "Tell me."

"There's not much to tell," she replied with equal simplicity. "There's a peevish invalid woman married to him who will die some day. Then he'll be mine. He'll give up the drudgery that's killing him, and we'll live in a garret while he paints the things he has it in him to paint. I don't see him often—I can't stand it. I have to have everything or nothing."

He found himself stroking her hair as softly and as dispassionately as if she were a sobbing child.

"Poor little girl!" he whispered many times. "I wish I could help."

Her eyes were wet when, with a wry smile, she released herself and handed him his hat.

"You're a darling, Stephen. Now run along."

He halted at the door for a long look at her, a slender black torch flaming in the sun, her tawny eyes beneath her tawny hair smiling at him high-heartedly.

"Grateful?" she asked.

There was humility, reverence, farewell, in the kiss that was his answer.

"Yes," he added. "At least—I will be—"

Then he left her.

When he emerged from the stair cavern into the dazzling autumn day, he felt very queer. It was as if the curtain had temporarily fallen on the absorbing drama of "Stephen Wells, Esquire," and he was existing in an aimless interval in which the outside world intruded sharply—the noon rush of the Gladwyn Lunch, the racket of passing trucks, the glare of the paving under the intensely blue sky. Without volition he started to move in the direction he was facing, but when he saw

that he was headed down toward Washington Square, the way they had gone last night, he reversed abruptly and began to walk up the Avenue.

Block after block he kept on, in a curious daze in which he still did not suffer. Bright colors, moving forms, the eternal refrain of a city's noise, surged toward him, up to him, past him, in endless waves that he breasted without sensation. But gradually he became conscious of them, till they were at last intolerable, and Fifth Avenue, preoccupied and gay in the October noon, was pounding cruelly at him, a bit of alien flotsam struggling in its swift tide. Homesickness for Lindalia swept him like a bodily weakness.

Swerving aside from the current, he drew into a shop doorway and stood there trying to think. But the sight of the street made thought impossible. He turned to the window, to find himself staring dully at gilded letters that spelled, "Waists from Paris." Then he saw, on a form in the center, a rose-colored wisp, sheer and spangled, with dangling sleeves.

As if he had had double vision, he saw beside it a rose-colored lamp shade, sheer and spangled and buttoned up the back with small pearl buttons. He winced and shifted his glance, which was caught by a splash of black inside the window just beside his hand.

A Persian kitten was sleeping there, its glossy fur pressed flat against the glass.

He studied it intently for a moment, then passed through the door and asked for the nearest telephone booth. The action was as instinctive, as detached from his brain, as his every movement had been since he had stumbled down the stairs from Genevieve Quest's studio.

Nor had he yet begun to think when he called the number that would connect him with little Rose Cross.



THE GREEN BOUGH

by Reita Lambert Ranck

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR FERARD

Woman proposes—and why not, if a war wedding to a perfect stranger can turn out like this?

THE road to Great Merrilton, narrow and well rutted, dropped gently away just beyond the Clays' front gate. When Phyllis came down the walk, shading her eyes with her hand, in search of the butcher's wagon, she could see the uneven outline of the village in the dipping distance, but the half mile of hollow between it and the gate held its traffic a secret until the road lifted suddenly and set its treasure at her feet. Never a dull day drowsed off into twilight that Phyllis Clay did not bless that hidden hollow and its rare thrills.

Now, while she awaited the coming of the butcher, she stooped, and her long, indefatigable fingers busied themselves among her pansies.

The Clay homestead, a solid, substantial memorial to the late fifties, sat far back from the sunken picket fence, well guarded by aged oaks and maples. The pansy-bordered walk was narrow and precise, and the stretch of grass from house to fence had the distinction of being kept in order by the lawn mower. The fields beyond rolled and dipped and mingled with the slender pines and ferns of the wood.

The rumble of wheels brought Phyllis to her feet, and quite suddenly the familiar outline of Turner's wagon sprang up into view out of the hollow. Her childish delight in this phenomenon lit her sober gray eyes as the cart approached.

"Mornin', Miss Clay! Nice day!"

Hal Turner pulled up his mare and sprang down. Phyllis nodded brightly and followed him to the rear of the wagon.

"Not much to select from," he said, jerking open the door and thus transforming the interior of the cart into a miniature market.

Phyllis gazed speculatively at the hanging haunches and steaks.

"I guess you can just give me some stewing lamb," she decided. "About a pound and a half'll be enough I think. Art Doogan's coming to work in the garden to-morrow, and I'll have to give him his dinner."

He wiped his hands on the besmeared apron that bound his substantial figure and threw a piece of lamb on his scales.

"Well, I guess we're in fer it real serious now, by the looks, ain't we?"

"You mean the war?" asked Phyllis, watching the dismemberment of her stew lamb.

He nodded.

"We're mobilized already, did ye know? It'd take somethin' to git ahead o' this county. The boys are goin' to leave from Great Merrilton. We're nearer the junction than any other depot. They'll likely be comin' along to-morrow or next day."

He paused and spat well into the grass.

"Well, I don't know anybody who'll be going," she said. "Will they have a parade, do you think?"



"Well, I guess we're in fer it real serious now, by the looks, ain't we?"

"Shouldn't wonder, if they all git here long enough 'fore train time."

He piled the meat onto her proffered plate and climbed heavily back into the front seat.

"My sister's two boys from Hancock's j'ined, ye know. She couldn't hold 'em," he said proudly, and touched his horse with the whip. "Well, good day!"

"Good-by," said Phyllis, and walked swiftly up the trim walk and around to the kitchen door.

She washed her meat and set it on the shining stove in the iron kettle. She said to herself that it was astonishingly warm for June, and went through the hall into the somber sitting room.

She dropped into the rocker facing the mantel, as she always did when a certain unholy sense of aloneness and rebellion came over her. For here, she told herself, she was surrounded by the memorials of her parents' melancholy life, compared to which her lone existence was a joyous thing. There above

the mantel, in a ponderous gilt-and-velvet frame, was her mother. It was a hard face, with a bulging forehead and a sharp nose. It had always reminded Phyllis of a certain knotty apple tree that grew obstinately in the orchard and yielded acid little knobs of apples. The metaphor was enhanced by the row of smaller gold frames that hung beneath Mrs. Clay's portrait, containing the likenesses of Phyllis' four dead baby sisters—little girls in various stages of infancy, gazing out at Phyllis with weak, frightened eyes; eyes very like those of their mild, oddly unworldly father. Phyllis, being the youngest, did not remember them or her mother, who unexpectedly died when she was born. For Phyllis there had been only her father, who had never recovered from the dazed surprise into which the sudden relief of his wife's death had thrown him, and who had lived on, a gentle, ineffectual man, until Phyllis was twenty-four, when he had followed his wife and four babies to the Methodist cemetery across the railroad track.

He had remained long enough, however, to see Phyllis, in opposition to all prophecies and precedents, live and fulfill many of his gentle dreams as far as a handicapping sex would permit—for she was to have been a boy.

She rose now and lifted a graying Bible from the table and opened it at the flyleaf. "Phyllis Clay, a Green Bough. From her father"—the inscription was written in quavering, old-fashioned letters.

She laid the Bible down and went resolutely to the kitchen. The weight of her solitude lay very heavy upon her this morning. Remembering Hal Turner's conversation, it suddenly occurred to her that she had not even the most remote connection with so far-reaching a thing as the war.

At noon the postman brought her the paper. The front page blazoned

forth an indorsement of the butcher's news. The boys from Lee County were to leave from Great Merrillton day after to-morrow on the five-thirty for the junction. She decided that she would bring down the flag from the attic and hang it out. Then she turned the page and began her methodical perusal of the *Courier*.

Suddenly she was aroused by foot-steps on the walk, and she rose and went swiftly out onto the porch.

"Excuse me, ma'am, but can I get a drink of water here?"

"Why, certainly," she said. "Just sit down on the steps," and she fluttered into the house and began fiercely working the pump. Presently she was back with a sweating pitcher and glass.

The man on the steps stood up and reached forth an eager hand.

"Thanks!" he said and drank deeply.

One appraising glance had convinced her that he was not a tramp, and no respectable stranger could pass Phyllis Clay's door unrefreshed. He was a great, hulking, muscular man with indelible signs of the outdoor upon him. The coat of dust upon his heavy shoes, which squeaked loudly when he walked, did not disguise their newness. His ready-made suit, too short at the wrists, was, one could easily see, the garb of unusual formal occasions. His hair and face were sunburned and wind-whipped, and in his great red hand he carried a limp collar and tie.

He offered the half-empty pitcher at last, wiping the back of his hand across his lips.

"That's the real stuff," he said. "Thanks!"

"Won't you rest a minute more? Have you walked far?"

He twirled the limp collar in embarrassed hesitation.

"Well, I don't mind if I do," he said. "Been walkin' since five this mornin' from out beyond Miller's Cove. Mighty hot for this time o' year."

"You must be pretty tired."

The sincerity of her sympathy brought a self-conscious grin to his lips. He shuffled his feet uneasily.

"Well, I thought I'd start early so as to have some time to look around the village before train time. Been workin' nigh onto two years ten miles from any town. I wanted to get a look at this one before I left."

"You going through Great Merrilton?" she asked.

"Yes," he said in surprise. "Why, ain't you heard? We're mobilized here to-day—the men from Lee County—the ones goin' to war."

"It's not till day after to-morrow the men are going," she corrected. "Are you going to war?"

He raised a blank face.

"Day after to-morrow? You sure?"

She nodded emphatically.

"Well, by Jiminy!" He reached into his pocket and brought out a smudgy piece of paper.

"I guess you're right," he mused. "My notice is sort o' mussed up. I guess it does say Thursday instead o' Tuesday."

He produced a richly colored bandanna and mopped his head and face. Then, because of the day, perhaps, which was alluringly sweet, or from the desperation of that sudden overwhelming loneliness, she did a rash thing.

"I was just going to sit down to dinner," she said hurriedly. "You are welcome to share it."

He looked up gratefully from his seat on the steps at the thin, prim figure in its crisp calico, and his red face turned a deeper crimson.

"Oh," he said, shuffling his uneasy feet, "I guess I hadn't ought to put you to all that trouble."

She laughed a bit nervously.

"It—it isn't trouble. I'd be glad—for a soldier."

He followed her into the cool sitting room, limping a little, and dropped un-

comfortably into a stiff plush chair. She had seen the limp and hurried away, returning almost immediately with a pair of large worn slippers in her hand. As she approached him, a wave of hot color mounted into her cheeks.

"It'll rest you to put these on after walking so far," she blurted. "They're old ones of my father's. Then come right out in the kitchen."

Five minutes later, he followed her into the spotless, fragrant kitchen, where she bent over the table with its clean red cloth, its worn silver and gay dishes.

"You sit here!" She indicated the chair opposite hers. "I just made cold tea, because the stew is hot, anyway, and here are some pickles. Maybe you don't like beets; some people don't. Would you prefer milk to tea?"

She chattered on, hardly less embarrassed than he, but the wholesome sight of the food broke his reserve, and he went heartily at the stew and pickles and beets and crisp johnnycake, washing them down with huge gulps of cold tea. Once or twice she glanced shyly at him, not without a shudder as he conveyed small mountains and towers of food into his capacious mouth. Unconsciously she planned an omelet for Art Doogan's lunch to-morrow, realizing that she could not hope for much left-over stew.

Finally he pushed his plate from him and sighed voluminously.

"You'll have some gingerbread and sauce," she said and rose to clear the table.

The effect of the food, together with the intimacy of the performance, had succeeded in putting him almost at his ease.

"It was real nice of you to ask me—a stranger," he said, as she set the new supply in front of him. "I hadn't had a thing since four this morning."

"It's good you stopped," she said simply.

He munched a piece of gingerbread with relish.

"Do you live all alone?" he asked finally, but there was no real curiosity in his voice, merely the genial desire to talk, induced by the stew—and beets—and tea.

She nodded.

"Ever since my father died, nearly eight years ago."

strangely. She found it hard to control her thoughts.

"I didn't have to go to war," he vouchsafed. "I could easy have been exempted."

"Oh!" she said. "I think that is very brave."

"No," he denied simply, "it wasn't that. But I'm tired of workin' out there—one day just like another. My par-



There was a stifling silence; then he sprang up and backed away. "Well, I'll be——"

"Nice garden!" he commented, his eyes on the innumerable neat rows visible through the screen door.

"Yes. It's all I got—the place. I have to make it pay."

"Well," he said, thrusting out his lower lip and swinging one huge leg over the other, "I been workin' in a garden of just about a thousand acres. Some farm! Belongs to my uncle."

She exclaimed politely over this. His masculine presence there at her table—his easy familiarity—was affecting her

ents is dead, too, and I made up my mind never to marry. It don't matter much if a man like me gets killed. I got a hunch I will, too."

"Oh," she said, "and didn't you want to do anything—to be anything?"

"No," he said, "I did once. I had a girl, but she was goin' with another fellow all the time I was keepin' company with her. He brought her presents. That was all she cared about—the gew-gaws she got out of us. Girls are like that, you know."

He was so utterly unconscious of giving offense that her indignant wave of color died away unrelieved.

"Yes," he went on, "you can't trust 'em. They just want to work you. And they're weak. A man can't—can't admire 'em."

She sat stiffly quiet for a moment while he finished his apple sauce. Then the fire in her eyes was succeeded by a dim wistfulness.

"You'll go to Paris," she said softly, "won't you?"

He nodded nonchalantly.

Paris, to Phyllis Clay, was a black dot on a pink map, a strange and wholly inaccessible word in her mouth. Once she had been to Boston to order her father's gravestone. Always she had fought off other vague and violent yearnings, but they had never dared to include anything so godless and foreign as Paris. As she watched him there across the table, something happened inside of Phyllis. It was lucky for her that he was not an observing man.

"Paris is very far away," she said thoughtfully.

"Pretty far," he agreed. "But I don't care—I'm game for it, and the farther, the better."

"Then you probably won't be coming back?"

He shook his head ponderously.

"Guess not," he said.

She leaned across the littered table. The clock on the mantel over the stove nearly deafened her.

"Then—then marry me before you go!" It was as if the words had been forced out without her volition.

For endless ticks of the clock there was a stifling silence. Then he sprang up and backed away, his fringed napkin clutched in his big hand, his eyes wide and fearful as if he had glimpsed some spectral thing.

"Well! I——"

Then he saw that she was as frightened as he himself—more so. She was

clutching the table until the knuckles of her hands stood out like white little knobs against the red cloth. Her breath was coming in sharp gasps. The sight restored her bravado.

"Well!" he repeated, trying desperately to assume a swaggering superiority. "Well, I'll be—— Here! You better have a swallow of this tea!"

He poured the dregs of tea into her glass and held it out to her. She gulped it mechanically.

"Now," he said as she set the glass down, "I guess you didn't mean that, eh?"

She rose and walked dizzily across the room to a raffia paper rack on the wall and came back with a folded paper. It was old and yellow, with a paragraph conspicuously circled in blue pencil. Silently she handed it to him. He accepted it suspiciously, careful to keep her at arm's length. As he read, his heavy brow wrinkled in perplexity.

"Yes," he said finally, "I'd heard that. Three women to one man in this State. But what——"

She interrupted in an unsteady voice.

"I'm thirty-two," she said. "I've never had a chance, nor known what it was to have men friends. My father was sick. I was all he had to care for him. Then, when he died and left me the farm, it was in the will that I couldn't sell it. I had to stay. When he died, I was too old and too ignorant to go out alone, with no money to learn the world. The men here—there aren't any—or else they're like you." Her voice took on a choked fierceness. "You can do the asking; we just have to wait. And you shirk your duty and deny somebody—like me—their natural right. It isn't just, it isn't fair! And it's in me to get married. Look!"

She hurried away and returned immediately with the worn Bible.

"From my father," she said. "His family was different from my mother's. They'd been places and knew things.

They were sweet and romantic. My mother didn't love my father. She tried to kill the romance in him—but he handed it on to me. When I came, I was the last one. That's what he named me—'Phyllis.' It means a green bough, because he said he thought his life had turned out to be a dead and withered thing, and maybe if he called me that, I'd prove to be a green bough and live some of his dreams. I want to, and I'm just withering more and more each day!"

Once started, she had become unconscious of herself, and the spring of her oppression gushed forth at last in vehemence and passion.

"And there are plenty like me—afraid to speak or act—while you and others like you just go on your way, leaving blasted lives behind. You won't have to support me—or even to see me again. You're going away too far for it to matter. You can forget."

He had, in his casual, impersonal glances at her, seen only the slender, flat-bosomed figure of a spinster, the severe coiffure of her hair, her serious eyes. Now, in the frenzy of her confession, somehow, she had rounded and softened imperceptibly. The terrible outburst over, she seemed to droop and shrink, and he noticed that the eyelashes resting on her thin scarlet cheeks were long and heavy. The severe outline of her brown hair was disturbed, and loose strands started out boldly, while her breast rose and fell painfully.

Astounded beyond all expression, he was, for a few moments, amazement incarnate. Then a perplexed frown drew his heavy brows together once more.

"But I don't see," he said slowly, "why—why— What good will it do you? How will it make things better if I do marry you and go right away day after to-morrow, like you say?"

She sank wearily into the chair, clasping its worn arms in a perfect agony

of embarrassment. She tried to speak, but her tongue had shriveled into a useless thing. Hopefully she raised her shamed eyes to his face, but he was still staring in puckered amazement.

Finally—

"Why—why—" she began, and he stepped closer to hear the words. "I—I— Marriage—I thought— You see I'm so alone—nobody belongs to me—and I thought the green bough—perhaps—a fruitful one—"

She could never have done it twice. Some day he was to know just what those few words had cost her, but just now her meaning struck him like a stunning blow. For a moment incredulity overlapped all other emotions. Then his expression changed. A light, not wholly civilized, shone in his eyes; his lips quivered slightly. Surely she—well, she didn't look exactly undesirable. He was on the eve of a man's war, a man's life.

When he spoke, his voice was oddly husky.

"All right!" he agreed, and tried to speak with a sort of hearty carelessness. "When—when shall we do it?"

"I know the minister," she whispered. "I'll have to tell him you're—you're an old friend."

"Sure," he agreed. "That'll sound natural."

Somehow she managed to wash the dishes while he strode restlessly about the big, cool house. Then she went upstairs to her room and for a long time knelt beside the wide white bed. The cold water on her face only seemed to enhance its vivid color, and her hands shook pitifully over her difficult toilet. When she reappeared on the porch, he was sitting there, his feet once more in the articulate shoes. He glanced up at her, and it was at once apparent that, while she had not once wavered from her purpose, he had suffered all the tortures of vacillation these last three hours. As his eyes rested on her now,

in her soft gray dress, which smoothed and softened the too-thin outline of her figure, his first unselfish concern showed in his face.

"Say," he began, approaching her, "I—well, I don't feel that this is just right—specially to you. Maybe we'd better not."

"Oh!" She laid a protesting hand on his arm. "Oh!"

His eyes narrowed at the touch. He shook off his concern.

"All right, if you're game," he laughed shortly. Then he sobered. "Say," he said, "my name's Peter Jeffries. You better remember."

The mild, genteel little minister could not disguise either his surprise or his suspicions. He asked Peter to sit down and dragged Phyllis out into the hall.

"Why, my dear," he exclaimed, taking off and adjusting his glasses nervously, "I never knew that you had a young man; I never heard of this young man. Are you sure that he is the sort of young man your father and mother would want you to marry?"

"I'm of age," said Phyllis simply. "It's my affair."

"Well," he said reluctantly. Then he looked at her sharply. "When did you meet this—this Mr. Jeffries, Phyllis?"

"Oh, on a vacation once," she faltered, "out near Miller's Cove."

"Um!" Plainly it went against the grain. "And has he got the ring and everything?"

Phyllis drew a wide gold band from her pocket and offered it to him.

"My mother's," she said dryly. "I won't trace it."

An hour later, the two went slowly up the pansy-bordered path. It seemed to Phyllis that the ring on her finger was amazingly heavy, and she was conscious of the maddening squeak of her husband's shoes. The air had cooled, and the sun, sinking slowly out of sight,

seemed to be draining her of all vitality and leaving her curiously numb.

"I'll get some supper," she said, and went into the kitchen.

He followed her presently, his feet again in the loose slippers. Through the meal, which neither of them more than played with, they made pathetic attempts at facetious repartee. Then she put a shawl around her shoulders, and they went out onto the porch to watch the twilight settling like a foggy breath upon the fragrant meadows.

For a long time they sat in silence, though the wonder grew in her that he did not comment on the beating of her heart. Finally he rose and approached her awkwardly.

"You're cold, ain't you?" he said.

She nodded.

He reached down and took her hands, drawing her to her feet. For a moment she trembled and shrank from him in a frenzy of fear. Then her thoughts flew out beyond to the promise of the green bough, and she raised her head bravely. She could just see his face in the swiftly gathering dusk, and his eyes were shining down at her, brimming with gentleness and admiration.

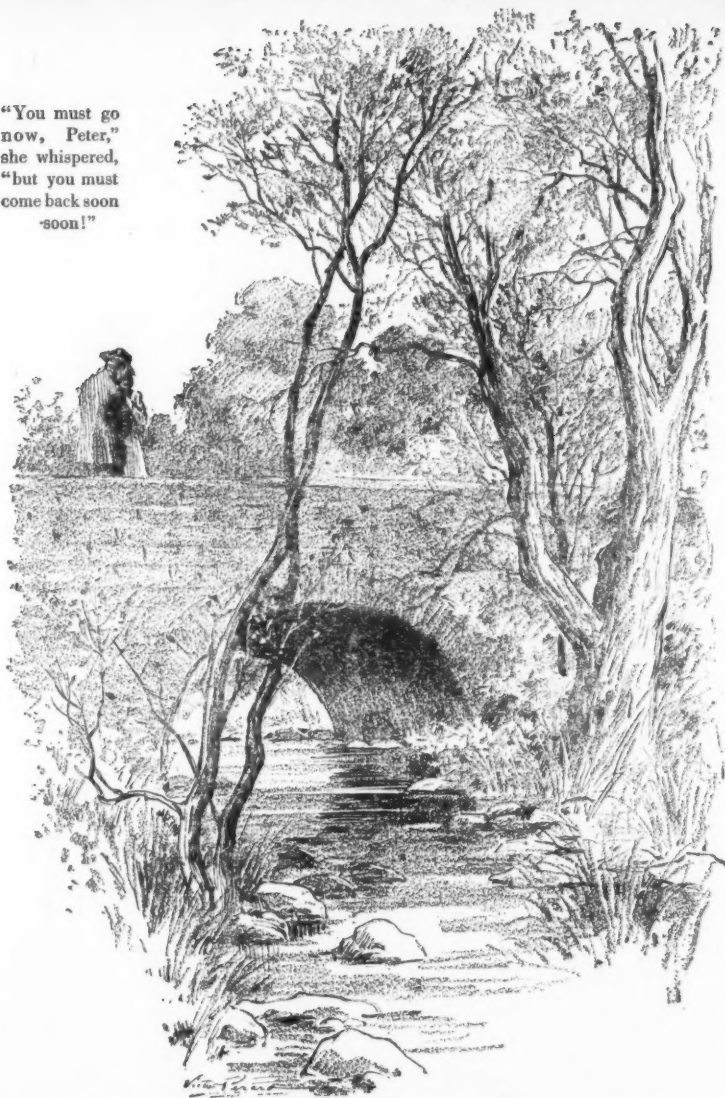
He stretched out those great arms and drew her to him protectingly. Awkwardly he smoothed her hair; she would not have believed his touch could be so light. When he spoke, his voice was soft and husky.

"You're a regular woman!" he breathed. "As brave as any soldier! I never saw a woman before I could admire."

Gradually he felt the tense figure relax. Stooping, he kissed her face, the tears upon her cheeks, and, he still holding her closely, they went into the big, silent house—together.

Two days later, Phyllis Jeffries and her husband walked out through the fragrant fields beyond the garden, away from the distant hum of the village ex-

"You must go
now, Peter,"
she whispered,
"but you must
come back soon
soon!"



citement, down the fern-strewn hollow
to where an infant brook babbled be-
tween green-velvet banks.

Oddly different he looked, with
tragedy drawn in thin, new lines upon

his open, sun-browned face. As for
Phyllis, cold terror gathered and grew
inside her as the afternoon sun moved
westward once more.

They stood silently there by the little

stream, while words gushed and rushed into their throats and died unspoken. But the inexorable sun moved ominously toward that square foot of blue which would mean five-thirty and separation.

He could not tell just then what was likely to happen to his benumbed being—utter speechlessness, perhaps—a dumb adieu with nothing said—or imbecile loquacity.

He was glad, finally, to feel words coming, and to know that he was powerless to stop them.

"When—when you did that the other day"—something warned him that to mention more definitely her heroic proposal would be indelicate—"you did it—well, like makin' a bargain, because you knew I didn't want to come back—or mean to, because you knew I was goin' so far away."

He paused there, but she did not lift her drooping head.

"I—I want you to know I'm a gentleman. I'll keep to what I said and not come back, but first I'm goin' to tell you that—that I feel different now. I do want to come back. I don't want to take advantage of you, but—but—"

He turned swiftly and caught her hands, a primeval fierceness in his lately casual face.

"I just got to know now, and if you say so, you'll never see me again, so help me! But that first day I was different. I didn't take it very serious. I didn't know there *was* a woman like you. But now I know I love you. I won't never come back if you say no—if you just care about the—the green bough. But if you feel different, too, tell me, and I'll come from anywhere. Tell me you want me, Phyllis—tell me—"

The sight of such uncontrolled, contorted emotion was new to her. It terrified and intoxicated her. And he had said the thing she had willed him to say, completely passing over her unmaidenly coercion—ignoring, forgetting it.

Far in the distance, like the plaintive wail of a newborn babe, came the warning whistle of the five-thirty en route to Great Merrilton and Islip Junction. She crept shivering into his arms.

"You must go now, Peter," she whispered, holding him fiercely, "but you must come back soon—soon!"



THE PROFLIGATE

THE gossips tore his reputation to shreds over their teacups, but little children loved him.

He poisoned himself at the wine table, but he gave a needy brother a cup of coffee and a bun.

He stole the hours he needed for sleep and buried them under a deck of cards, but he spoke a word of recommendation for a gaunt woman who sought a position as janitress at the club.

He broke the commandments written on stone, but engraven on his heart was the law of love.

He openly defied Mother Grundy, but he never tattled of the night when he saw the face of his friend's wife through the window of a car belonging to her family physician.

The gossips tore his reputation to shreds while he lived, but when he died, some kindly remembrance lay deathless in every heart that knew him.



WHAT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Lonquille

Would you know yourself—your character, your disposition, your traits, your lucky days? Would you know some of the things that are likely to happen to you in the future? If so, you will be interested in following each month Madame Lonquille's articles on Astrology.

ARIES

BETWEEN March 21st and April 20th of any year, the Sun is passing through the constellation or set of stars known as Aries, and the sign of the Ram. This is the first sign of the zodiac, and coincides with the first month of the old Roman year. A fiery, cardinal, and leading sign, it endows all those born at this time with certain particular characteristics.

They are usually short of stature, but well made, with a clear complexion. They have a generous disposition even to their enemies, and are people one may always trust. The ruling planet is the red, fiery star, Mars. This sign gives great love of change, and the natives of it are constantly renovating and altering, with a view to bettering their conditions. But they must have their own way, and are very uneasy and unhappy when under the control of any one, for they have many useful ideas and must give vent to them. Their keen imagination gives them a great tendency to elaborate on their thoughts, and if a scheme is good or important, they make it appear much better, or if it is bad or distressing, they will exaggerate these qualities in their own mind, for they never seem to stop at the happy medium, but fly from one extreme of thought to another.

They are, however, people of very

simple, unaffected manners, always saying just what they think in a clear, straightforward way, being easily understood and gaining respect. Though not particularly clever or skillful with their hands, they make very successful inventors, always ready with a new scheme or clever idea that must be worked out immediately. Their minds are always alert; quick, and very ambitious, and they have strength, courage, and ability. They are always undertaking some wonderful, original plan, which must be rushed along, the actual labor being done by others. Their acute mental perception gives them the ability to grasp a situation at once, and decide just what measures are necessary to meet it.

Broadly speaking, Aries people are intuitive, energetic, ambitious, frank, self-assertive, intellectual, and entertaining, fond of change, constantly looking forward and never backward. They always entertain an optimistic outlook for the future, and the wonderful ability to forecast events is a marked trait of all Aries natives. They cannot endure small, close rooms. They love air, light, elegance, and beauty, and are dwellers in the country whenever it is possible. They crave space and an out-of-door life. Roaming in the woods and hunting are always a de-

light to these people. Many mountain climbers have been born in this sign.

The energetic, enterprising disposition found in the developed type often leads to high honors in fields of mental activity. They are born leaders and teachers, and can readily convince people of the uselessness of old customs and conventionalities. The real virtues of this sign are found to be love of truth, of free and independent thought, which is ever generous and helpful.

The highest ideality is found in the developed type born in Aries. They have the bravery and boldness of the pioneer, and intuition that can explain all things. They possess the courage of one who is willing to die for a cause. Men who ventured to penetrate the West in forty-nine were of the Aries type, bold, fearless, and leaders always.

Very often Aries natives have wonderful artistic abilities. They will be leaders in new phases of art, invariably introducing striking subjects and venturesome ideas that require time and thought for acceptance by the public.

THE THREE DECANATES.

To get a trifle nearer the individual characteristics of those born in Aries, the sign may be divided into three parts, or decanates, of about ten days each. The foregoing characteristics are marked or subdued according to the decanate in which the native was born. The first type, born the last week in March, are sure to be people very quick in action, who never stop to think before in action. They rarely listen to advice, and are very hard to control.

The second type, born the first ten days of April, are more favored, much steadier in their actions, and controlled a great deal through their affections. They are honest, true, and sincere, having great sympathy for their fellow creatures.

The last division, from the 10th to the 20th of April, has developed the gener-

osity of the Aries nature, and at times they are even extravagant, but the love of change is very marked in this type as well, and an evening up is very possible. Those born in this last decanate of Aries are prone to fly headlong into danger, and will probably come to grief from lack of forethought.

BUSINESS QUALIFICATIONS.

In employment, the Aries types are leaders and organizers. They should hold positions where the direction of work is very important, also the management and arrangement of affairs for others. They are always at their best in these capacities, because their clear foresight and clever way of seeing how work should look when finished is a very strong trait. If they cannot be relied upon to do the hard manual work of developing new ideas, they can put plans before others in such a simple, clear manner as will enable them to be thoroughly understood and worked out.

The Aries natives make the best aviators, for they feel at home in the air, and their quick, active brains always tell them the correct thing to do instantly. Should an Aries person choose a military career, there is no doubt that he would make a wonderful success, with his ability to train and organize. Mars, the warring planet, being the ruler of his life, would bestow great honors and promotion in this field of work.

HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Aries natives usually have strong constitutions, and if the other planets are not too unfavorable, they enjoy robust health. This sign governs the head and face, and overwork or much worry will cause these people to suffer from severe headaches or mental troubles. Their active brains, when the least stimulated, will cause insomnia, and they will lie awake at night, scheming and planning, and often are compelled to resort to some sedative to get the re-

quired sleep to keep their health. These diseases, if not overcome, in time occasionally react upon the stomach and kidneys. The nerves of the face and head are often affected by a rundown system or neglect and worry, which causes the Aries natives to suffer from neuralgia and neuritis. Life in the country is best suited to these people, who must have plenty of rest and quiet and an out-of-door life, plenty of sunshine, air, and freedom, to keep their health and thus to bring forth the creative ideas and schemes so characteristic of the natives of this sign.

CHILDREN.

Children of the Aries type need constant and intelligent attention. They are often a great annoyance to their teachers and parents, especially if the older person does not understand or have a great deal of patience with them. Their active, energetic, inquisitive minds must not be suppressed too much, and all their questions ought to be answered, for these children must know the whys and wherefores of everything. They will pick to pieces their toys to find out how they are made. They often show very early artistic instincts, which should be helped and cultivated. The ideal teacher for this type of child must be sympathetic with his daring, curious, prying disposition and at the same time sufficiently practical and matter-of-fact to know just when to curb and hold in check the child's reckless disposition. They are born with a very slight degree of cautiousness, and if they can be taught to look before leaping, it will be the lesson most helpful to them during their lives.

LOVE, MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP.

Though Aries people are very fond of the opposite sex, and delight in social life, they do not marry easily, and unless married at an early age, they are extremely cautious about choosing

a mate or are not anxious to marry at all.

They are good entertainers and, having a keen wit and a great deal of tact, they draw many people to them. However, they will find the greatest happiness with those born between November 21st and December 20th. Aries people should avoid marrying those born between June 21st and July 21st, or between December 21st and January 19th. They will find agreeable companions born from May 21st to June 20th, or January 20th to February 18th. But they will find that friends or companions born with the Sun in the sign Leo—July 22nd to August 21st—can be of great help to them, even if they are not quite so happy in their company.

GENERAL PREDICTIONS.

Aries natives are prone to many changes in their financial careers, and probably will be owners of land and houses, coming to them after marriage or by inheritance. There are many lawsuits and losses for them, but although quarrels and disagreements are sure to arise, the partner of an Aries man will bring business and much good to him.

In childhood there are dangers of many kinds, due to family troubles and moving from place to place, which is very likely to interfere with the career of these natives. They should beware of trouble from relatives or danger due to headstrong, fearless actions at the ages of seven, nineteen, thirty, and forty-four.

Aries natives run great risk of not living out their allotted number of days, for great perils and unforeseen dangers are sure to occur if they are not favored by Mars. As to children, the sign Aries is against offspring, or it gives but one or two at the very most.

Napoleon III of France was an Aries native, as were Zola, J. Pierpont Morgan, Houdini, and Madame Stein-

heil. Astrologers have noted these people as typical Aries characters. Certainly their lives, marked by fiery ambitions and many peculiar and disastrous circumstances, have been unusual.

Tuesday seems to be the most fortunate day for natives of this sign to start any new enterprise or make a change of any kind. The amethyst should always be worn as the precious stone. Red is the astral color.

If you were born in the morning of any day, you will be more fortunate; the ability and strength are yours the better to rule your stars, and it is your duty to change your environment until you find the road that will lead you highest in life and to conquer all handicaps found in the way. Those born in the afternoon find a harder, more uphill road in life; Fate seems to be always watching, the influences at birth are difficult to overcome, circumstances usually have to be accepted and made the best of.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H., Born April 13, 1882.—You were born with Mercury in Pisces, the Fishes, rising, and the Sun and Venus are in Aries, intercepted in the first house. This makes you rather a complex personality. You are a natural reasoner and thinker, possessing an active brain and an inclination for scientific thought, research, philosophy, and educational pursuits. You have an independent character, are a leader in your way, and have your own ideas of right and wrong. The only way in which you can be controlled is through an appeal to your reason.

The Moon is making no aspects, something very unusual. But Mercury is in conjunction with Venus. This makes your mind merry and cheerful, fond of music, singing, poetry, art, and science. You should be a good poet. You are fond of dancing and of young people.

Mercury is also in splendid aspect to Saturn and to Jupiter. This gives you a splendid

memory, good judgment, and success in a literary way. It makes you very steady in your behavior, careful, persevering, and thoughtful, and fond of science, and helps your judgment a great deal.

Venus is also in good aspect to Saturn and Jupiter. This, again, promises success, makes you fond of nice clothes and ornaments, and promises a steady attachment, but we see no happiness for you in marriage and only one, or possibly no, children.

The Sun is in opposition to Mars. This makes you headstrong, rash, firm, determined, quick in anger, but generous. It gives a liability to feverish complaints and a sudden or violent death, and as Mars rules your house of death, you must never enlist. You should always carry an accident policy. The Sun is also in evil aspect to Saturn. This will derange your health and cause colds. Also, it shows a loss in business, and you will do better possibly in a profession.

Jupiter is in very good aspect to Saturn. This promises wealth and success.

Herschel also makes no aspects, but, being in the seventh house, threatens a divorce. Also, this is bad in the event of law suits and disputes, and you must avoid all forms of partnerships. Mars is in that same house, and both planets are retrograde, showing misfortune and a sudden marriage followed by separation, many quarrels and disputes, many persistent enemies in business, and loss by law or litigation.

In July 1919, the Moon is in good aspect to Venus. You have domestic happiness and, if married, the birth of a child and money. January 1920, the Moon afflicts Mars. This will cause a quarrel, an accident, or a loss, and you will need to guard your health. February 1920, the Moon afflicts Herschel, and this will prove another serious time for you. You will not feel well, or you will take a journey or make an unfortunate change.

In January 1921, the Moon is in good aspect to the Sun; money or a lady comes, and you are successful. In March 1921, the Moon is in good aspect to Mercury, and you feel happy, are studious, and gain in a literary way or meet with general success. In July 1921, you are secretly happy, and in September 1921, we believe the Moon will then come into conjunction with Saturn, and you will lose an elderly relative or be ill. It will not prove a very happy time for you.

Madame Lonquille will select for publication each month one or two readings of the most interesting horoscopes she casts. If you would like to take a chance upon your own being one of these strongly marked astrological maps, send in the date, and exact hour, if possible, of your birth, together with the place of your birth. Madame Lonquille may choose yours for publication—who knows?

The Illuminated Keyhole

By Hayden Talbot

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

Of course we are for prohibition, but now and then we can laugh at a fancy like this. We think you can, too.

[T wasn't easy, but it had to be done.

And so the Earl of Kiltucket—up Jack Taunton, to his friends—up and did it. It was at the end of a house party where he and his fiancée, Helen Tracy, were guests, at the ripping old ancestral home of the Duke of Sleith. He had put it off as long as he could. Now it was a case of must.

So he took Helen off to a distant corner of the grounds and told her as decently as he could that their marriage was out of the question. The reason was simplicity itself: Jack was broke.

Incidentally, but this he did not say, he was of that breed of titled Englishmen who do not believe that their titled estate warrants their using it—commercially.

The reason why Jack was broke was also simple. For four years and three hundred and sixty days he had been on the wagon. With every passing week of teetotalism, he had become more and more dull. Each investment he had made had been more disastrous than the preceding one. Alcohol had been his good fairy; temperance unquestionably was his jinx.

Don't assume that we are advancing an unmoral theory. Behold the virtue of our hero before we are done with him!

Of course he would remain on the wagon—this last gravely said and with eyes downcast, lest Helen should read in them a martyr's light. The reason he had clambered aboard it was no less operative than it had been five years ago.

Five years ago, lacking five days, Helen had told Jack that she would consent to become his wife only in the event of his eschewing all strong drink for one-twentieth of a century. He had craved the reward then sufficiently to try to earn it. He still craved the reward; what was more, he had lost all desire for alcohol. But his very making good had wrecked his happiness. Pessimism had claimed him for its very own. He would go to his grave a teetotaler—and a bachelor.

Even were his fortune intact, he would have no right to inflict himself on any woman. A month with him and she would be overwhelmed by the same blue devils that made his life miserable. But, above all else, his fortune was gone—and there was nothing left for it except to break off the engagement as decently as might be.

And so he brought his announcement to an end.

To his amazement, he found that its effect was quite the reverse of what he had expected. He had figured without Helen. And she, it speedily developed, was quite the antithesis of his lordship. Where he was morbid and lacking in self-confidence, she was brilliantly optimistic and sure of herself. His blue funk was contrasted with her assurance. His obviously weakened will was emphasized by her superb strength of purpose. In a word, Helen Tracy was boss of the situation—and Jack pliant in her hands.

"Our marriage, my dear Jack, *will* take place, as planned, exactly six days

hence. And you need not come to me a pauper, either. I shall enlist the good offices of the pater, and in his own inimitable fashion, he will so manipulate certain shares on the Stock Exchange as to enable you to reap a rich harvest of golden sovereigns in jig time."

Jack knew Helen's pater only too well. And he was not enamored of the prospect of being thus dependent on Sir William on the eve of becoming his son-in-law. Not that Sir William would take any mean advantage of it, but of what use would be any number of golden sovereigns when the only thing Jack could hope to do with them, after their accumulation, would be to lose them instantan? And so he tried to protest that it was all no use, but it was a weak attempt and easily overridden by his masterful fiancée.

By way of stimulating her husband-to-be to a realization of the uselessness of even thinking of making an end to their dreams, Helen brought the tête-à-tête to a conclusion by telling Jack that his failure to marry her would leave her no choice but to accept the Duke of Sleith, that impossible bounder whose guests they were, and who more than once had tried to make advances.

Poor old Jack! For the life of him, he couldn't see why Helen shouldn't jump at the chance of becoming the Duchess of Sleith. As between a dukedom and an earldom, how could she hesitate? Especially she might consider the affluence in the one case, the poverty in the other.

But Helen's answer was a laugh.

"You goose! Can't you see that I love you? And I don't love Sleith a little bit."

And with that she took his hand and led him back to the big house and its occupants.

Alone with his thoughts, Jack came to a decision. He loved Helen. He would have given an arm to marry her. But now he was in deadly earnest and

told himself that for once he would not yield to her wishes—unless——

Later in the evening, he took the desperate chance. He consented to sit in a big poker game with the duke, Sir William, and others of the men guests. For Jack that game meant everything. If he got up a winner, however negligible the winnings, it would be an omen. He would dare hope one last hope. But before he began, he made winning impossible, confiding to the Duke of Sleith his reason for joining in the game. Now the duke wanted Helen for himself, and purposed being rid of her accepted lover by fair means or foul. When, therefore, Jack in all innocence explained just what even a little success in the game would mean to him, the duke craftily planned his ruin.

At the end of the session, the Duke of Sleith was in possession of almost everything Jack owned in the world, save only his fifty trunks of clothing and other equally trifling details.

In the very early dawn—while the great house slept—Jack left without a word to any one.

With the discovery of his disappearance the next forenoon, the house party ended abruptly. For the moment at least, the dark plot of the duke's was foiled. For Helen announced that she would find the Earl of Kiltucket if it took the rest of her life, and dragged her father away to begin the prosecution of the search.

What use the duke's trickery at the card table, his acquiring possession of Jack's stables, town house, lands, if he might not possess Jack's girl? To win so much only to lose all—was it any wonder that the Duke of Sleith twisted the needlelike ends of that waxed mustache furiously?

As a matter of fact, Jack had merely gone home. Buried in his study, he worked feverishly all through the day, making final disposition of his worldly

belongings, the aforesaid trifling details of no intrinsic value, although of course there are individuals who count valuable rings and watches and cigarette cases of solid gold and ties that cost a guinea each. The annoying part was that there were so many of these confounded details. By dusk Jack was completely fagged out.

But at last every detail was arranged. Not a servant had been overlooked. The will—a whimsical instrument attesting to a sense of humor which even the solemnity of the document itself could not down—covered a dozen pages. It had taken a lot of doing, but now it was done—and rather neatly done, even if his lordship did say it as shouldn't.

All day long, Jack's butler had informed anxious inquirers that his lordship was not at home, had not been at home, and was not expected at home. Sir William had started Scotland Yard on the job—quietly, of course—and Helen had insisted that her portly old father himself motor from club to club, restaurant to restaurant, all over London, until he had covered every haunt ever haunted by the Earl of Kiltucket.

Now it was evening, and Sato was helping his master into his evening clothes. The fact that Jack was about



Helen's answer was a laugh. "You goose! Can't you see that I love you? And I don't love Sleith a little bit."

to go forth to put an end to his useless life might seem to make his donning a dinner jacket incongruous, but it would seem so only to folk unfamiliar with dukes and earls! Me lord or milady, about to swallow cyanide of potassium with suicidal intent, would unquestionably brush his or her teeth. Oh, dear, yes! For habit is a powerful thing. And then for Jack *not* to dress for dinner would have been to cause consternation in the breast of his Nipponese valet and initiate suspicions that might easily have resulted in the detec-

tion of his fatal purpose by members of his household thus amazed. Wherefore, Jack dully allowed himself to be garbed as usual, and then went out into the night, alone.

In a hired taxi, after he had dismissed his own car, Jack crossed London Bridge. Outside a public house near the river, he left the cab and its driver, the latter speechless with joy as he looked at a five-pound note in his hand. Now Jack was absolutely not an American; the driver had recognized him as the Earl of Kiltucket. But there was that five-pound note—and it was undeniably genuine! There was only one explanation: "Is lordship must be orf 'is 'ead, bleeding balmy!" Whereupon, the driver dove into the pub.

His lordship had reached the middle of the bridge. It was dark. The river was black. Also, it was raining. Jack suddenly realized this latter fact. He was soaking wet. Even as he put one hand on the stone railing, about to leap down into oblivion, he was struck by the thought that he must present a sorry sight. He stepped back and removed his hat. It was all wrong. A man couldn't be expected to drown himself when it was raining like this! Anyhow—the idea was an inspiration—why not have one drink at least before taking the fatal plunge? Precisely, why not? And so—

Into the saloon bar of the pub came Jack, very wet and not at all his usual immaculate self, but with a light of stern resolve burning in his eyes as he ordered a double measure of the best brandy. The barmaid served him unemotionally.

One hour in that bar served to sweep away five years—four years and three hundred and sixty-two days, to be accurate—and now Jack was his old self again. In all three bars of the pub, champagne was the only drink being served, bought on the nod by his lordship—and, my word, how the place was

packed! The Earl of Kiltucket "ad come back to hearth arter five years of bleedin' purity, Gawd bless 'im!" So said the old ladies, forgetting their love of "velvet" and actually passing up the square-faced gin bottle for the seductive, luxurious lure of the effervescent grape. So said cabbies and tramps and beggars and touts and painted ladies who had swarmed into the place as word of his lordship's presence had spread like wildfire up and down the Embankment.

Among them was a plain-clothes man from the Yard. He had quickly recognized Jack, and hurriedly telephoned Sir William. At that moment, the latter was trying vainly to convince Helen that he had done all that it was humanly possible to do to locate the missing earl. But Helen was of another mind. Her father would not have done all he could do—and must do—until he had gone out into the night and continued the search on his own account. And it was such a beastly night! And Sir William's drawing-room was so much more comfortable than riding about in the rain!

But with the announcement of the plain-clothes man, Sir William agreed readily enough to go at once to the disreputable place and rescue the young man, whose mind must be temporarily deranged. And so he went, carrying Helen's urgent message that Jack come to her at once.

And now our tale suffers an interruption—an interruption coincident with Jack's amnesia. With Jack's eyes, we see that crowd in the saloon bar grow indistinct and grotesque, bodies and faces waving up and down like billows of the sea—smiling faces, friendly faces. But in the end, they disappear or, more accurately, change gradually into a wonderful, sun-kissed field of flowers undulating in a gentle breeze. Of course, when we suddenly discover

that this is simply Jack's distorted imagination, and that he is still very much the enthusiastic host, dispensing hospitality with lavish hand, we realize that, while he is present in the flesh, his mind is wandering in Elysian fields. And thus it was when—

Sir William bustled in and accosted Jack in dismay. To Jack, this sudden intrusion took on the form of vandalism in his beautiful flower garden. It was not Sir William *he* saw. It was a very self-important, loudly braying donkey who came trampling down the flowers! Wherefore, Jack put an arm about the donkey's neck and led him away smilingly and in friendly fashion. Why argue with a donkey?

Outside the pub, Jack agreed to fare forth with Sir William to scenes and among persons less repellent to his father-in-law-to-be. And this is the very last we see of either of them until—

It was one of those wonderful mornings in early May in London. The sun was shining. Through the high windows in his lordship's study, the joyous rays danced in as if they knew how seldom they were permitted this treat. For the study adjoined his lordship's bedroom, and the blinds on that side of the house were never raised until noon, except on those rare occasions when his lordship consented to leave London and his comforts.

A telephone bell rang.

The small, white-coated figure that had been occupying a straight-backed chair beside the desk sprang to its feet. When it raised its head and stared stupidly about the room, one recognized the Oriental in one of its rare natural moments.

Again the telephone bell rang.

The little Jap ran to the instrument and removed the receiver.

"Ess, plees?"

His usually inscrutable features be-

trayed his disappointment as he listened.

"No, he ees no come, Mees Tlacy, plees."

Before he answered the next question, he had quite recovered his normal tone of voice and was once more the valet.

"Ess. I tell him, plees. Ess, plees. Ess, plees. - Ess, plees."

The pauses between these several affirmations were really lengthy. During the telephonic communication, his lordship entered the room.

"Enter" hardly describes the manner of his coming. Still in evening clothes, sadly in need of the tailor's goose, the young man sidled through the doorway and performed what looked like imitations of a novice making his first attempt to skate.

"Meester John!"

The little Jap fairly shrieked his pleasure and relief, dropping the receiver and rushing to his master. That young gentleman leaned back against the wall. With great difficulty, he managed to raise his left hand to a level with his valet's deficient chin, one finger outstretched as if to accentuate the rebuke.

"Sato," he said, as distinctly as he could.

"Ess, plees?" replied Sato eagerly.

"How many times have I got to tell you to call me 'your lordship?'"

"Ess, plees, y'r lawsh'p, but you mek Sato so happy you come home! Sank you, sank you, sank you!" And thereupon he dropped on one knee, seized his lordship's hand, and pressed it to his forehead.

"I absolutely refuse to be kissed," declared Jack. "Just for that, you son of Nippon, you're discharged!"

"Ess, plees." Sato's face was suffused with an almost beatific smile, as if he were recalling happy days of long ago. "Now you like to go to bed, plees?"

"No. Anybody can go to bed."

And with that he essayed the perilous task of leaving the anchorage of the wall. Sato came to the rescue and convoyed him carefully to a large arm-chair into which his lean form sank until it seemed that he would merge into the upholstery.

Sato suddenly realized that the receiver had been off the hook all this time. As he hurried toward the telephone, he said:

right," came from the depths of the chair. "I'm not here. Tell her I've gone to— Oh, tell her I've gone to Upper Tooting." His lordship chuckled.

"Ess, plees." Sato was addressing his remark to the transmitter once more. "Mees Tlacy, plees? Meester John, hees lawsh'p, he not here. Ess, plees."

As he listened, a grin overspread his little face.



One hour in that bar served to sweep away five years—and now Jack was his old self again.

"'Scuse, plees."

His lordship let his head fall around the corner of the big chair.

"Wait a minute!" Sato stopped as if he had run into a stone wall. "Who is on the other end of that thing?"

"Mees Tlacy, plees."

By now Sato had his hand over the transmitter.

"Miss Tlacy Plees," echoed his lordship. "Don't know the lady."

"Plees," expostulated Sato. "Mees Tlacy, your honorable to-be-wife."

"Oh, *that* one?" and his lordship allowed his head to swing back behind the jutting arm of the chair. For a moment he was silent. Sato waited. "All

"She say," and this time, as he addressed his master, who was again hanging limply over the arm of the chair, he did not cover the transmitter with his hand, "she say she hear you."

His lordship arose and reached for the instrument as dying men are said to clutch at straws.

"Why, how do you do?" he began. "I don't know when I've seen you looking so charming." And then he was seized with a violent paroxysm of coughing. "Where have I been? I've been for a walk. Where? In the tube. Intoxicated? Say not so, fair lady! I assure you you're mistaken. I'm merely squiffy—squiffy. S-q-u-i-f-f-y!"

For a space, his lordship stood gazing at the instrument as if waiting for it to offer corroboration of something it had conveyed to his ear. Then he let it drop on its side and brushed the receiver away.

"Sato," he said, "you're mistaken. The lady is not my honorable wife-to-be. She distinctly said good-by."

"Ess, plees. Now you like to go to bed, plees?"

His lordship did not seem to hear. Sinking into a chair beside the table, he gazed across the room to the mantel, where stood several framed photographs of his fiancée.

"I haven't got time to go to bed," he said suddenly, energetically. "What day is to-day?"

"Saturday, plees."

"Saturday! That's it! That's the day, Sato! I've a great surprise for you, a great surprise! How long have you been my boy?"

"Seven year, plees."

"Right-o. And now you're discharged!"

"Ess, plees."

"Well, be surprised! I haven't discharged you before for five years."

"Ess, plees. You been teetotal five year, plees." There was a twinkle in his eyes.

"No, Sato, not five years—four years, three hundred and sixty-three days. The five years aren't up. That's the difficulty. I am finished. Understand that? I'm finished."

Far off from below came the muffled sound of the doorbell. His lordship rose to his feet as if shocked into sudden rigidity. Shortly there came a knock at the door. In pantomime he ordered Sato to answer. It was a liveried footman, to announce Sir William Tracy. His lordship's chest sank, his backbone rounded into its usual curve.

"Show him up!" he commanded.

Sir William bustled in as if fully expecting to continue his progress through

the study into the bedroom. At sight of his son-in-law-to-be leaning languidly against the flat-topped desk, still in his dinner jacket, he stopped short.

"Haven't you been in bed at all?" he gasped.

"Bed?" repeated his lordship, as if the word were anathema. "What's the matter with everybody? The bed doesn't need me, you know."

Sir William had not lived nearly sixty years, forty of them in the City, without having learned to recognize certain well-established symptoms of the malady known generally as "the morning after." The City man surveyed his future son-in-law critically, but kindly.

"I suppose I really ought not to blame you," he said finally.

"Blame me? You ought to envy me. I wouldn't take a hundred thousand pounds for what I've got."

"Naturally not," agreed Sir William, smiling broadly. "Why should you, when, in the next twelvemonth, you'll be worth easily twice that amount?"

"What?" ejaculated his lordship.

"Don't you think so yourself?"

"A joke's a joke. Let's let it go at that."

"Really, Jack, you——"

"I'm stony. You know that. I owe you ten thousand."

Sir William took this announcement with a broadening of the complacent smile. The younger man gazed at him in genuine perplexity.

"Don't I?" he queried finally.

"You do," replied Sir William, and seemed tremendously happy at the thought.

"Well, why smile? I can't pay it."

"Oh, come, Jack! That's a bit too thick! You surely realize what you've done."

"Don't I?" returned his lordship bitterly. "I've gone four years, three hundred and sixty-three days, without a single drink. I've made a camel look like a constant guzzler. The Sahara

Desert was a swamp compared to me up to last night. I've come to within two days of keeping my promise to your daughter—my promise to become your son-in-law if it killed me—and then right at the finish I've gone out and deliberately accumulated the most thorough package one man ever wrapped himself around. I've created a shortage in the world's visible supply of liquor that can't be——"

He stopped short as if struck by a new thought. Up to this point, his voice had quivered with self-pity; now it became charged with an accusing quality as he glared at his father-in-law elect.

"And you," he exclaimed, "you are responsible! Yes, sir, you! You came to me last week and said, 'Settle!' I couldn't settle. I can't settle." Melancholy claimed him again. In an altered tone, he went on, "I owe you ten thousand pounds; I've gambled away this house—everything I've got. I have exactly one shilling left. I've lost the girl I love, and I'm about to die. Congratulate me."

His listener erased the smile as one erases writing on a blackboard. It was the City man who spoke.

"Very well, but I can't waste any more time. Are you ready for me to buy or not?"

"Buy? Did you say buy?" His lordship turned helplessly about in search of his valet calling loudly for him.

"Please, Jack, be serious."

"Serious?" echoed Jack. "I am serious. You ask me if I'm willing to let you buy—and I am. Heaven knows what I've got to sell, but——"

The sound of a bell ringing downstairs stopped him.

"Too late!" he moaned. "It's the bailiff's men!"

"What are you talking about?" Sir William was beginning to believe there was something wrong with the young man's brain.

"They've come to take possession. Oh, save me, you were to have been, but never will be, my father-in-law!"

Sato slipped into the room. As he did so, Jack distinctly heard a voice—a woman's voice—in the entrance hall. It was indisputably cockney. He glanced at Sir William. That gentleman had also heard the voice. Then Sato delivered his message:

"'Scuse, pless. Lady say tell you she ees Mees Laveenia."

"I haven't the slightest doubt of it, Sato, but why does she come here and blame me?"

"Ess, pless, but she say she mus' see you."

"I don't know her." And then it occurred to him he might as well die amused as bored, and he suggested to Sir William that *he* receive the unknown caller.

"Oh, no," said Sir William, once more smiling. "She wants to see you."

"But I tell you I don't know her. Look here, I know I've broken faith with Helen, but there's never been any Lavinia in my life, and I won't have it appear that there——"

Sir William interrupted.

"Don't be absurd. See the woman."

"Would you?" His lordship was none too sure.

"Of course," replied Sir William, as if nothing in the world could be more usual than receiving unknown women in one's evening clothes at ten o'clock in the morning.

"All right," said John, and then, to Sato: "Let her come up."

There never had been anything wrong with his lordship's imagination, and in the half minute that ensued it worked rapidly. But in his wildest dreams he never conceived anything so weirdly wonderful as the costume of the young woman who now appeared before him.

From the high-heeled, particolored boots to the ponderous straw hat with its mountains and valleys of many-col-

ored hen feathers, from the plaid skirt that missed her shoe tops by an inch to the green feather boa that encircled a high-collared neck, she was a riot of more colors than men of science have been able to combine.

Her face, which had been set in its usual professional, noncommittal expression between a friendly smile and a rebuking frown—to either of which, by long practice, she was able to turn with lightninglike rapidity—now showed a feeling akin to amazement as she gazed at her host.

"My Gawd, your lordship! Ain't your lordship been to bed at all?"

"Who are you?" he managed to stammer.

"Who am I, indeed! That's a good one, that is!" And then, turning to Sir William, she smiled her professional smile. "Mornin', sir," she said amiably.

His lordship turned on Sir William.

"Do you know her?" he gasped.

"Does he know me?" responded the young woman. "Awsk him if he knows me! Well, rather!"

The amazing part was that Sir William seemed more than ever amused. Jack suggested that the elder man introduce him.

"Ow, come off, your lordship! You don't want no introduction to me!"

"However literally true that may be," replied Jack gravely, "the fact remains that I do not know you."

"I see!" suddenly burst from the animated, mixed-up human rainbow. "It's my glad rags! You don't recognize me in 'em." She was altogether self-possessed now. She winked slyly at Sir William, but she continued to address the younger man. "I don't spend my entire life the working side of a bar, you know."

"A what?"

"A bar—a place where liquor is to be had, your lordship. You've heard of a bar, now ain't you?" And again

the amazing young woman winked at Sir William, this time quite openly.

"Jack," remonstrated Sir William "this is Miss Lavinia, head barmaid at the Daventry Lounge."

"A friend of yours?" Jack was ready to yield a point and call this a fairly clever shot.

"Well," replied Sir William, not in the least disturbed, "we met her together, now didn't we?"

"Did we?" Somehow the point of his bon mot seemed to have been blunted.

"Didn't we?"

"Plying her trade?" A suspicion of the truth was beginning to dawn on his lordship.

"You certainly should know that. You kept her busy enough, to be sure."

"Last night?"

"Last night."

"Oh."

He had lost track of everything very early in the evening. Until this moment, he had had no idea that his father-in-law elect had even seen him. So they had been together during some part of the long, long night. And together they had visited the emporium in which this colorful lady by day was the black-garbed priestess by night. In all probability, he had offered to bestow on this presumably agile dispenser of liquid refreshment his shooting box in the North, or some other such trifle. He must inquire.

"Now that we quite understand one another," he began, in an attempt to duplicate as far as possible his probable graciousness of the night before, "perhaps you will tell me to what I may ascribe the honor of this visit?"

"You know why I'm here right enough." There was a thinly veiled menace in her tone, it seemed to him. "Your lordship made me a promise, and I'm here to have you keep it."

His worst suspicions were confirmed. He must fence for time.

"Did you hear me make her a promise?" he asked Sir William.

"Ow, chuck it, your lordship! I ain't on duty now. I've had enough in workin' hours."

"But this promise!" He couldn't very well ask what it was.

"That's what I'm here to know about. Are you goin' to keep it or not?"

Jack stammered something unintelligible. How could he answer when he had no idea what he had promised?

"You ain't! That's always the way! You ain't! And after keepin' me awake all night, too!"

"I kept you awake all night?" Surely Sir William would support him in a denial of this charge.

"Do you think I could close my eyes after what you told me?"

"Couldn't you?"

"Who could? And now it's all a joke! You were spoofing about taking my savings!"

"Did I promise to take your savings?"

"Didn't you? How else could I buy shares in your invention?"

"My invention?" Things were becoming complicated.

But wonders were only beginning. After much undoing of variegated satin ribbons, the barmaid produced from somewhere in the mysterious recesses of her violet blouse a large leather wallet. With a flourish, she emptied its contents on the desk.

"I've only five hundred here," she apologized, indicating the little hill of sovereigns and tightly folded bank notes, "but I know where I can borrow as much more, if you'll have it."

"You expect me to take five hundred pounds from you?" His lordship was weak.

"Didn't you promise to?" Again the threat in the tone of her voice.

"Just a moment, please."

Here was a mystery that needed explanation. There could be no doubt

about the young woman's feverish anxiety to leave her money, and it was very good money, in his keeping. He must know why. He led Sir William to a distant corner of the room.

"What else have I promised her?" he whispered.

Sir William smiled, a tantalizing smile.

"I'm waiting," came from the barmaid.

"Well, of course," said his lordship, "if you insist."

"I do insist," came the reply tartly. "A swell like you comes and sets a girl's head all in a whirl, talkin' about your great invention and how you're goin' to make millions, and you up and offer to let me get into the thing, and then, the mornin' after, you bloomin' well forget all about it! Well, let me tell you, your lordship, I got an alibi, I have. And I advise you to take my money!"

And then, for the third time, that confounded doorbell!

"That's done it!" Jack gasped, and then, to Sato, "I'm out."

The valet disappeared quickly.

The barmaid interrupted the tense silence.

"I don't wish to make it hard for your lordship, but your lordship promised to take my money, and——"

"Henri, plees," announced Sato.

It didn't sound like a bailiff's name. Jack turned to Sir William.

"Our waiter at the Savoy at supper."

Of course it was. He should have known it was. He didn't remember the supper, but Henri had been his waiter for years. Suddenly a wild idea dawned on him.

"Did I promise to take his savings, too?"

"You did," said Sir William.

"Show Henri in," commanded his lordship. His delusions were systematized in any event.

"*Bon jour, m'sieu!*" began Henri, as



"Does he know me?" responded the young woman. "Awsk him if he knows me! Well, rather!"

he entered the room, and with a Latin flourish he produced a check. "*Voilà, m'sieu.* You see, I keep my word."

His lordship took the bit of paper. One glance at the figures neatly set

down at the lower left-hand corner was enough. Placing a hand over his eyes as if to shut out some specter, he held out the check toward Sir William.

"Please read those figures," he

begged, "and please don't see what I saw!"

Sir William adjusted an eyeglass and glanced at the check.

"Eighteen thousand pounds," he read quietly.

His lordship seized the bit of paper feverishly and turned on Henri fiercely.

"Is this your check?" he demanded.

"*Mais oui, m'sieu.*"

"You've got eighteen thousand pounds in a bank?"

"I've saved, m'sieur." The waiter was almost apologetic.

"See here," said his lordship hurriedly. "I'll go to a Turkish bath immediately. Then I'll meet you in front of the Savoy, and you take me in the back way and get me a position as a 'bus boy, will you?"

"It is to laugh, your lordship!"

"You want me to take this check, do you?"

"Naturally."

"Because some time last evening I promised to take it? Is that correct?"

"*Mais oui, m'sieu.*"

"Well, of course, if I pledged my word of honor to take eighteen thousand pounds from you, I expect there is nothing for me to do except take it."

"How about me?" It was the barmaid.

"Really," began Jack, "I don't like to take your money."

"Isn't that always the way? Us girls tryin' to be decent on ten bob a week, and when we gets a chance to escape our wage slavery, what happens? Our sex is held up against us. It ain't as if takin' my money would matter. It's only a bit. You said so, and I knows it. But it'll pay me a hundred per cent a year. It's the greatest invention of the age, that's what it is."

"Do you really think that?" His lordship was almost beginning to believe it himself.

"Every house in the British Empire will have to have one, won't it?"

"Every house?"

"There's one thing you failed to explain last night, your lordship," remarked Henri soberly.

"I'm astonished," commented his lordship.

"Will it be altogether concealed, or will part of it be visible?"

Sir William, adopting an especially irritable judicial tone, suggested that this was a fair question and deserved an answer.

"Why," stammered Jack, consumed with a diabolical desire to wring Sir William's fat neck, "why, which do you think would be best?"

The query threw Henri into paroxysms of delight.

"Ah!" he shouted. "You can make it one way as well as another!"

"Absolutely as well," admitted his lordship.

"Marvelous!" almost screamed the waiter. "You are a wizard! And you will accept my check?"

"I suppose I must."

"*Ah! Je vous remercie!*"

The barmaid, having gathered up her little hill of gold and paper and put it in the wallet, now held it toward his lordship.

"You ain't goin' to deprive me of my chance, are you?" she asked piteously.

The young man hesitated one last moment. To rob a Savoy waiter might be included in the list of justifiable felonies, but a barmaid— He thought of descriptions he had read of the feelings of pickpockets engaged in stealing coppers from blind beggars. And then he took the wallet.

"Oh, thank you kindly, your lordship!" The barmaid's eyes were dancing with joy. "And when I take my William to be my lawful wedded man, I'll give your name to every son I have, so help me I will!" And with that Lavinia swept out of the room in all the majesty of her happy heart.

A warning cough from Sato caused

Jack to glance up from his sightless scrutiny of the pattern in the rug. Henri was at the door, bowing rapidly in an endeavor to catch his eye.

"Au revoir," he said, and disappeared.

"Good-by!" said Jack vehemently. And then, turning on Sir William, "Perhaps you'll tell me what all this means!"

"Perhaps," retorted Sir William, "you'll first talk business with me."

"Are you going to give me money, too?" If Sir William said yes, his lordship decided that he would promptly have Sato telephone for an alienist.

"Haven't you kept it up long enough, Jack? You know what I said I'd do last night."

"Say it now, will you?"

Sir William contented himself with directing a scornful glance at the young man, at the same time producing a legal-looking document from his coat pocket.

"Here is the agreement," he said coldly. "I had it typed this morning. Look it over."

"Not now," Jack protested. "Perhaps those closely typed pages might hold the secret of his invention, but a perusal of them, with his head splitting as it was, was an impossibility."

Sir William shrugged his shoulders.

"As we agreed, the concern will be capitalized at two hundred thousand pounds. Of this I am to put up one hundred and ten thousand and own a controlling interest. Except for these few shares you have let your friends buy, you will own the rest, payment for your invention. You see, we shall have ample funds to build a complete plant and operate it until we are marketing the goods and making a profit."

Jack caught at that last word. It was really the only word he had understood.

"And what would you say the profits may be?" he asked.

"If you can produce the finished article for one and six, as you say, we can certainly get a half crown for each one wholesale. Say we market a hundred thousand a month at first. There is a net profit of five thousand a month—sixty thousand a year."

"And I get half of it?"

"Not quite. There are Henri and Lavinia. Don't forget them."

"I never shall."

"Well?" Sir William was smiling paternally. "Are you satisfied?"

"No," replied Jack weakly. "I'm stupefied."

"You'll be yourself after you've had some sleep. But first"—and he produced a fat fountain pen from a waistcoat pocket—"I think we'd best sign this agreement."

His lordship took the pen and leaned across the desk, the legal document at arm's length.

"You know," he said gravely, "I trust you, but I couldn't read the headlines in an American newspaper today. I haven't an idea what I'm signing."

"Your name on that paper," explained Sir William solemnly, "means that from now on your income will be from thirty to fifty thousand pounds a year. I can guarantee at least that."

"That is enough," said Jack, as he sprawled his signature across the page.

Sir William now took pen in hand and, with much adjusting of his eyeglass, added his name to the mystic document. He then showed Sato how to witness the two signatures, a performance the Jap refused to have anything to do with until Jack convinced him it was quite all right.

"There we are," he said finally, pocketing the document. "Now I'm off. I've an estate man coming at noon to show me factory sites. Will you come along?"

Before Jack could make answer, Sato entered a violent protest.

"Scuse, pices!" he cried. "Now you like to go to bed, plices?"

His lordship ignored the Jap.

"Do I look crazy?" he demanded of Sir William.

"No," replied that gentleman.

"Well, I am. I've been hearing things and seeing things. I'm stony; I've discovered nothing worth anything all my life; I've disgraced myself; I can never be your son-in-law; but for old times' sake, because of what you hoped I'd be—will you lend me enough to take me to the Riviera or somewhere so I can try to save my mind?"

"Don't be absurd!" Sir William objected to silly jokes at any time. Now he was really put out. "You can't leave London. You're needed. No one else can perfect this thing."

"There you go again!" wailed Jack.

"Jack, I'll lose my patience if you don't stop!"

"What's your patience compared with my mind?"

"You know nobody but you can perfect it."

"Perfect what?"

"Your invention."

"Now I know I'm crazy!" and his lordship flung himself face down on a settee.

Sir William knew that he was being spoofed, but he must be polite as long as human endurance could stand it.

"What is the matter with you, Jack!"

"Just think of it!" His lordship was laughing hysterically now. "I just heard you say I was an inventor!"

"You are."

"Don't!" Jack was sobbing like a little child in mortal fear. "I can't bear it."

There was no mistaking the genuineness of it. Even Sir William began to put two and two together and arrive at the real answer.

"Do you mean to say you really don't know what you've done?"

The young man sat upright.

"Of course I know what I've done. It's what I've undone that matters. Five years, lacking two days, of happiness and hope and temperance—and—stupidity! For five years, I've plodded along without one original, bright, clever thought. I've been eternally on the wrong side of the market, slowly and surely losing all I had. And then—last night! I remember very little of it, but it seems you caught up with me at some time during the mad, mad hours—and now you and a barmaid and a waiter come and heap money on me and call me an inventor, and I really see you and hear you and—everything! Isn't it enough to make anybody realize that his mind is gone?"

"I can't believe you're serious, Jack."

"Serious? With a head six sizes too small and a Turkish towel in my mouth? Oh, no, I'm not serious! I'm full of childish laughter!"

"But how could you describe your invention in such minute detail?"

"There you go again! My invention! Unless you want me to go completely out of my mind, for mercy's sake tell me what it is!"

A new angle of the situation presented itself to Sir William.

"And I have agreed to invest one hundred and ten thousand pounds to make you a fortune," he said.

"Please don't say that again until you tell me what I've invented. If I am an inventor, I'm not clairvoyant."

In lieu of a reply, the young man received only a glance that patently combined amusement and pity. At length Sir William—who had been knighted because of his many well-advertised charities—declared himself:

"I think I shall leave you to find that out for yourself." And he started to walk to the door.

"You couldn't!" pleaded his lordship, pulling himself to his feet in an ecstasy of terror.

Sir William slowly opened the door



"But I do understand, I do!" insisted Helen, on the verge of hysterics. "Everything is finished! I won't marry a man who drinks!"

and swung it inward until its edge was on a line with Jack's gaze.

"Does that suggest anything to you?" he asked, pointing with a lean forefinger to the latch.

"Not a thing."

Sir William opened the door still wider until the polished brass knob and,

below it, the hand-wrought facing of the keyhole came into sight. The forefinger, like a schoolmaster's pointer, rested on the keyhole.

"How about that?" he queried.

"The keyhole?"

"Precisely. Your invention goes in there."

"Does it?"

"Now don't you know what it is?"

"A key?" queried the overtired earl.

"No, dear boy, not a key—an electric light!"

"A what?"

"An electric light." Sir William's voice was proud. "You, sir, are the inventor of the greatest boon mankind has ever known. You have invented—the illuminated keyhole!"

"The illuminated keyhole," said Jack slowly. "The illuminated——"

And then the whole epoch-marking value of his invention burst upon him.

"Great Scott!" he shouted. "It's wonderful! Sato, your master is a great man!"

"Ess, plees. Now you like to go to bed, plees?"

But Jack didn't even hear the plaintive question. The would-be suicide was now trying to cakewalk, chanting a tuneless refrain as he cavorted around the big room.

Sir William shut the door hurriedly.

"Helen is coming," he whispered as the young man pranced by him. "You mustn't let her find you like this. Go into your bedroom and let me talk to her."

His lordship stopped short.

"Not a bit of it!" he said energetically. "You go into the bedroom and listen to me talk to her."

Sir William looked dubious.

"Don't worry," continued Jack. "I'm perfectly sane now." And he pushed his father-in-law elect across the room and through the doorway. This accomplished, he addressed Sato: "Ask Miss Tracy to come up," he commanded.

In the minute that elapsed after Sato's exit, he rummaged through the drawers of the desk with feverish rapidity. By the time his fiancée entered, he was seated at the desk, pencil in hand, making endless columns of figures at top speed. On the floor about the desk lay crumpled sheets of paper,

inches deep. It was his idea of the way a man of affairs ought to be found!

Helen, her smartly suited figure as rigid as would be some day the marble replica his lordship secretly intended having a great sculptor make, her head erect, and in her eyes an expression of lofty disdain that told eloquently the story of the sacrifice her coming had cost her—Helen walked into the room. In her gloved hand was a packet of letters tied with pink ribbon. She set them on the paper-strewn desk, close to his lordship's right hand.

He sprang to his feet instantly, a smile on his face, a word of welcome on his lips.

"I will thank you to let me leave now without speaking to me," said Helen coldly, evenly, unemotionally.

And then she started for the door. His lordship merely stared at her back.

Helen put her little gloved hand on the knob. Then she turned slowly and faced her fiancé. There was a new note in her voice when she spoke, a suggestion of polite contempt added to the disdain.

"Have you not one word to say in your defense?" she asked.

His lordship continued to regard her smilingly.

"At least you might make an effort and be a man!"

"I don't know the sign language," said Jack pleasantly.

"Oh!" She had come prepared for anything except this buffoonery, this complacent, insulting attitude.

Then Jack walked to the bedroom door and opened it.

"Sir William," he called in a loud tone of voice, his back turned squarely to Helen, "your daughter wants me to talk without speaking, and it can't be done. Will you come out and explain for me?"

Sir William hurried into the room and approached his only child much as, probably, an elephant starts fondling its

newest born—awkwardly, but with tremendous care.

"You don't quite understand, my dear," he began a bit nervously.

"But I do, I do!" insisted Helen, on the verge of hysterics at sound of a duly compassionate voice. "Everything is finished! I won't marry a man who drinks!"

Sir William leaned close to his daughter and whispered.

"What?" ejaculated that young lady.

Sir William whispered again.

"What?" she gasped a second time, and then her eyes lighted on the penciled sheets of paper on the desk and floor.

Sir William whispered for the third time.

"What?" and the exclamation had become a veritable shout of exultation.

Sir William decided that his part of the task had been accomplished successfully, and stepped to one side. Slowly Helen turned toward his lordship. The light of hero worship shone in her blue, blue eyes.

"You have done this wonderful thing, and never even let me suspect you had it in you?"

"I never suspected it myself," said Jack cheerfully.

"But how can it matter?" she suddenly sobbed. "You've been drinking!"

"I have," agreed his lordship with gusto. "For five long years, I drank mineral water, and was about as use-

ful as a yesterday's newspaper. Now I've found myself."

"But why, oh, why, spoil it all this way?"

"Don't you know what I've invented?"

"Yes, but——"

"How can I demonstrate the efficacy of an illuminated keyhole unless I become squiffy enough to prove the need of it?"

The hero-worshiping light was rekindled in her eyes.

"You did it as a demonstration?" she cried joyously.

"Exactly," said his lordship.

"Oh, Jack!" And there was really no need of her adding, "Forgive me!"

"It's not easy, Helen, but I remember all the years you've waited. In any event, the inventor of the illuminated keyhole is nothing if not magnanimous. You are forgiven."

"Oh, Jack!" she breathed happily.

Sir William put his hands behind his back and looked out of the window. His daughter in the embrace of her fiancé, and that fiancé an earl, was a sight not meet for him to see.

But Sato took quite another viewpoint. The one great, dominating purpose in his Oriental mind thus far had not been accomplished. By long experience, he had learned the value of repetition. And so, quietly and politely, he repeated his hopeful little request:

"Now you like to go to bed, plees?"



SUBJECT FOR A SONNET

IF it were not flirting with death,
I should ask to meet you in my next reincarnation.

If it were not flirting with life,
I should ask to meet you this afternoon,
When your husband is out.

CARL GLICK.



Still the triangle, but with a difference.

HE recognized her at once. Her back was turned to him as she entered the Stocktons' music room, but her slender loveliness caught and held his eye as of old. He stared hungrily at her slim, velvet-clad shoulders, at the elusively familiar way in which she wore her chiffon scarf, at her gorgeous crown of night-colored hair. He muttered apologies as he made his way, slowly, but determinedly, past people to a vacant chair behind and a trifle to the left of her. Then, as if the little stir caused by his advancing had reached her, she turned and looked directly into his waiting eyes.

In the long, deep look that passed between them, he saw his memories merge into her memories of their past together. That happy past! The careless, perfect hours of youth that could never return to them!

The intermission ended. The low hum of voices ceased. He tried—she having turned to answer a remark of her companion's—to fasten his attention upon the really fine musical program the Stocktons were offering their guests. It was in vain. His thoughts kept drifting backward to that wonderful dreamtime when they had been all in all to each other. Ten years ago!

He repeated it with a mental start. Ten years ago! Almost a sixth of a lifetime spent since then! He felt, even now, sitting there so calmly, apparently listening to Madame Sopanio's contralto notes, some of the helpless agony of their parting. Surely that separation had been through no fault of his!

There was a little movement around him. The solo had ended. A spatter of applause swept across the room. A waving of fans lifted the heavy, languid air. He leaned forward to catch a glimpse of her profile to treasure, miserlike, and caught, instead, a whiff of the old, entrancing perfume she had always affected. He felt his senses swim for a moment. How it brought back the old feeling!

He remembered going to sleep, her arms around his neck, the perfume lulling him to drowsiness. He remembered opening his eyes to her bending face, the laces of her negligee sweeping that same fragrance across the morning breeze from her open window. It was a shock now, to see her turn and speak so intimately to another. He wondered if he were her husband. Ugly-looking brute! Quite suddenly, he found himself hating the man sitting there beside her.

Finally he realized that the musicale was over, that people were leaving, that he, too, must leave. But she was waiting for him, as he had hoped she would be, when he descended from the men's dressing rooms.

With a swift look at her unobservant escort, she brushed against him, and when the crowd swept them apart again, he held a bit of white pasteboard in his hand. He hurried out to watch her enter a big limousine and be whirled away. Had she tried to speak to him? He wondered if it were imagination or if he had really seen a little, fluttering hand blowing him a kiss through the car window. Shivering with excitement, he paused beneath a lamp-post, to see what the little card held for him.

Her name and address—that was all; no word of welcome after all the many years, no tender message, no invitation. Yet was not the card itself a mute invitation?

He pulled out his watch and glanced at the hands. Ten minutes of one! And the Stocktons' mansion was miles away from the Fifth Avenue hotel where she lived. He glanced around for a taxi. Not one in sight! He gritted his teeth as a realization of the hopelessness of his plight came to him. Nothing to do but walk, with a forlorn chance of a trolley to the subway. For he must see her to-night.

He had lived upon the thought of this meeting the whole dreary voyage. The ship had reached port two days late. She had not met him, although he had written her the date of his sailing, and he had hurried eagerly to her old address. She had vanished.

He had been forlornly grazing through the evening paper a little later when the notice of the Stocktons' musicale had caught his eye. The thought had jumped at him—why not go? Old friends of hers, old friends of his, the Stocktons. He would be welcomed. And surely she would be there. Well,

she had been. And now here he was, alone in a desert of suburban streets, with only his own muscle and exertions to get him where he wanted to be—with her.

At half past two that morning, the night clerk of the Grandway looked across the desk at a weary-eyed man, who was asking so impatiently for one of his guests.

"Yes, sir. She asked that you might be sent at once to her apartments, sir." The night clerk stifled a yawn. "Suite 312, sir."

It seemed hours to him before the elevator descended, before he entered, before he stumbled down the broad corridor on the third floor, searching for Number 312. Then a door opened silently at the end of the dim-lit place, and he moved forward toward it, feeling as if he were in a dream.

Her waiting figure, clad in sheerest silks and laces, stood silhouetted against the rose-colored lights of her boudoir. When he reached her, she drew him quickly within. The door swung to. Their lips met in a long kiss that washed away the somber shadows of the ten years. He felt her heart, as he had desired, beating against his heart. And he knew that they belonged to one another again.

A few minutes later, she drew away, with a little, tremulous laugh, only to return again to his arms.

"Aren't you glad I made you wait until we were alone, dearest?" she whispered. "I couldn't, I simply couldn't greet you before those people! Even now, it doesn't seem real, this meeting. I knew we must meet again some time. But, oh, the waiting has been weary!"

He wanted to reproach her for not having left her forwarding address. He wanted her to know the long blocks her caprice had made him tramp. But he could not bear to spoil her joy. If she were thoughtless, if she were capricious, therein lay her charm, like the

wayward, eternal springtime of April. And he loved her for what she was.

Hush! Was that the door opening behind them! He drew himself erect, to confront the red face of her husband. He waited for the flare of anger to deepen its redness. He braced himself to meet the mouthing, furious attack that must follow, for the first blow to be struck, that he might return blow for blow.

But lo, a miracle! The red face did not change its expression. It merely stared at him—at first curiously, then with a little dawning, friendly smile that changed into tenderness itself as the heavy, pajama-clad figure turned toward the woman.

And she, the woman! How she nestled against his shoulder! How her arms slipped up around his neck! She spoke breathlessly across the room to her husband, who stood watching her with eyes that smiled—and understood.

"William! Oh, William! You said he wouldn't come, because I delayed my welcome. But here he is! Just think—ten years since his father and I were divorced, and the horrid courts gave him to his father! Ten years since he was carried away, a little lad of twelve, to England to be educated! And now his father is dead, and he's come back to me, his playmate, his chum! Oh, William, isn't he wonderful? My son! My little son!"



VILLANELLE OF POOR PIERROT

OH, that she kisses and forgets so soon,
And will not hear my poet's serenade!
Bitter and sweet it is to love the moon.

She seals my eyes with madness like a boon,
Then flees me down the silver-silent glade.
Ah, that she kisses and forgets so soon!


I stumble after in my dancing shoon,
A pallid Pierrot from the masquerade.
Bitter and sweet it is to love the moon.

Vainly I follow while the jasmynes swoon
And all too fast the midnight lilies fade.
Ah, that she kisses and forgets so soon!

Vainly I seek her by the dim lagoon.
She does not care that I so far have strayed.
Bitter and sweet it is to love the moon.

I, who have spun a delicate cocoon
Of songs for her, am jilted by the jade.
Ah, that she kisses and forgets so soon!
Bitter and sweet it is to love the moon.

WALTER ADOLPHE ROBERTS.



THE DIARY of a DEAD WOMAN

by Elizabeth Burgess Hughes

Not quite so startling as the title might lead you to believe, because she was only "playing dead." None the less the story may thrill you.

I THINK it must have been about ten o'clock that I died. I know

I had been making up my mind to it for a week, and about half-past three, after I'd telephoned, I thought I saw my way clear. So, without packing a thing and with only a small hand-bag, I walked out of my husband's house—I, Thrace Willard, young and attractive, alive to my finger tips; and a few minutes later, I telephoned my husband, in a disguised voice, that a girl with the name Thrace Willard marked on her underclothing had been taken to the morgue for identification. They'd fished her out of the river, rather badly swollen, because the body had evidently been in the water for some hours, but would he come and identify her?

I hung up the receiver before the panic in Bob's voice had time to penetrate my conscience, and I walked out of that corner drug store an officially dead woman.

It was the merest chance, but I had risked it. A gambler runs long risks. Had it failed, that little scheme of mine—well, perhaps I'd not have died quite so hard, so *completely*, but I should have left Bob Willard's house for good and all that very day, even though I knew he'd raise a howl that would reach as far as my people up in Canada. I simply *would not* remain another season under his roof! But, knowing Bob as well as I do, I realized that the only way in the world to escape him would be to die.

Bob and I had quarreled. He is pig-headed, like all the Willards. And the night before, he hadn't come home at all. I didn't sleep a wink, and I *hated* him, most horribly. However, that particular scheme of mine involving the morgue dated back to a few days before, when Olivia came upstairs to say that some one wanted me on the phone.

I *loathe* Olivia! She's precisely the sort of servant Bob would select. If I were in an employment office, and they brought out one hundred women for my inspection, and Olivia was the hundredth, way down the line, I could shut my eyes and put my finger on her and say, "Mr. Robert Willard would like this one, please." She is prim and disapproving; she has a fit when I throw my clothes on the floor and leave things lying about. In short, she has no use whatever for frivolous, useless young women. She makes all this very plain without lifting a finger or saying a word.

Well, this time Olivia's mien seemed to imply that the person on the telephone was no lady; and when I went down and listened to the small, scared, eager voice, with its bad accent and slurring of syllables, I wondered myself who she was. She seemed agitated, and all I could get out of her that was in the least coherent was that she wanted to see me at once.

"Don't you remember Dolly Page, Mrs. Willard? You done some work at the settlement last summer, and I

seen you there. I always sort of liked your looks. Can't I come to see you for a few minutes this morning? There's something— Please—” Her tones trailed away, seemed to break and quiver without stopping.

Naturally, I'd no idea what she wanted, but I told her to come, of course. Obviously, no one with that frightened, babyish little voice could be dangerous.

You should have seen Olivia's face when she showed Miss Dolly Page upstairs! And just for a minute Miss Page gave even me what my dear old granny used to call “a turn.” She wore the most *awful* clothes—a regular conflagration of colors. Her hat, with its six or seven cheap ostrich feathers sticking in as many directions, was an unconscious caricature, and she wore dirty satin dancing slippers, run down at the heel, with the gayest plaid hoisery I ever saw in my life. She was a walking nightmare. But when I got a good look at her face, I nearly jumped out of my shoes. She was young and she was pretty; moreover, she positively resembled me! There was the same brown curly hair—I've rather prided myself on my hair—blue eyes, and general contour of features. And, at that, her expression was adorable—sweet, appealing, and trustful. But she lacked my *spirit*, I think—my knack of meeting issues squarely. She didn't look as if she had a particle of *spunk*.

It developed that I'd been kind to her and her mother last summer, and as she was going away, she wanted me to promise that I'd look in on her mother once in a while, as the lady was getting old, and Dolly wanted her to feel that she had at least one friend in the world. She just felt that I could be trusted to keep any promise I'd made. She'd always liked me. I sort o' made her think of herself as she might have been.

“You see, I'm going away on a—trip, and I may not be back—soon.” I thought she added that last word, but I couldn't be sure. “And she'll be lonesome. She thought a lot of you. If you'll just go to see her now and then, and if she's sick or anything, see that it's reported to the settlement people—I hate to leave her without nobody at all. She warn't no great shakes as a mother, but a person sort o' feels—don't you know?”

I didn't ask where she was going, because it was none of my business and I wasn't vitally interested; but ever since she'd come in, I'd been conscious of a mental irritation that gradually became painful. The color scheme of that girl's clothes, there in my rose-and-silver bedroom, was nothing short of appalling! And with that desire to remedy an æsthetic fault which was born with me, I remembered the clothes and clothes that were hanging in my closets, and thought what a really pretty woman she'd be if she were tastefully dressed.

So, without stopping to consider, I said:

“Dolly, you won't be offended, will you, if I give you a perfectly adorable gown and everything that goes with it? I'd love to see you nicely dressed for your journey. That—frock doesn't do you justice. Will you take it just as a sort of *bon voyage* gift from me?”

Her face didn't even lighten, as any normal girl's would have done, but she nodded assent.

“I don't mind, Mrs. Willard. It's real nice of you.”

That's why, shortly afterward, she stood there in front of my mirror in the *loveliest* dull-blue velvet gown with Oriental embroidery, a fetching blue-and-gold hat, and gray silk stockings and high-heeled pumps, staring at herself as if she had just met a baffling stranger. And not till afterward did I remember that my name was hand-

embroidered on every piece of the silk lingerie she wore!

It was a bit queer, but in a way the result was disappointing. She looked like a "regular girl," and much more refined, of course, but somehow those outlandish clothes of hers had made her seem shy and sweeter, as if a violet had been placed beside a sunflower. She didn't have any life about her—that was the greatest trouble. She couldn't wear my gown vivaciously; she dragged herself about and looked at you out of blank, absent, weary eyes. And yet that blue gown of mine gave her a sort of sharp sophistication, a tired subtlety, just as certain lights on a picture bring out things you hadn't known were there.

She thanked me, and took her Joseph's-coat belongings away with her in a bundle. At the door, where Olivia, her lips set in a tight line on observing my clothes in their new setting, waited to show her out, she turned and looked back at me.

"Be sure and look after mom. I'm going quite a long ways. Good-by, Mis' Willard—and good luck."

Now, isn't it strange how one misses utterly, at times, the stark, clear-cut significance of a thing? My mind was so full of Bob's defection that I let her go without realizing—

Well, it was late that afternoon, while I was lying down, trying to get rested for dinner, and wondering if I couldn't just die and end everything without further bother, that Dolly Page's parting remark suddenly came back to me like a thunder clap. "Quite a long ways!" I almost leaped out of bed. In a flash I saw what she meant. Of course! Fool that I had been to let her go like that without even putting out a hand to stop her! Why—it was *criminal*!

Something I'd once read about no woman ever committing suicide on the way to buy a new hat went comfort-

ingly across my distracted thoughts, but probably this was the exception to prove the rule, alas, for Dolly hadn't seemed enthusiastic about her new clothes. And as quick as ever I could, I got into my street things and made a dive for a street car and Dolly's mother.

I found that lady peacefully imbibing beer and a cheese sandwich. A huge, blowsy woman she was, with a red nose and a voice you could hear two blocks off. Between gulps she told me that "Doll" had gone to spend a week with her cousin; what was it to me? She smelled of something stronger than beer, and her manner was belligerent. Suddenly I felt very foolish. My tired, overwrought nerves had magnified Dolly's look and manner—that was all.

"I said, what t' hell is it to you where my Doll ish?" she inquired reasonably, but firmly, and I stammered something incoherent and fled.

Bob wasn't at home for dinner. He was very late getting in afterward, and went straight to his own room without giving one sign that he knew such a person as Thrace Willard existed! I hadn't even seen Olivia since Dolly Page's call. I was wildly, utterly, and abjectly wretched. Alternately I wept, pitying myself, and swore vengeance. And every now and then I thought of Dolly and that long journey. Finally some fit of compulsion made me telephone to the morgue.

"Yes, ma'am, they've just brought her in—a young woman in a blue dress. They're lookin' for identification marks now. Yes, ma'am, drowned."

I don't remember what else he said. I just stood there feeling completely paralyzed. You know how your mind goes on working, like lightning sometimes when your body seems to have lain down on the job? Well, I knew in a minute what I meant to do, but for the life of me, I couldn't move.

It was the sound of Olivia's voice, somewhere in the back of the house, that lent wings to my feet; I fairly *flew* up the stairs. There was time only to jumble a few toilet articles and some money left over from dad's birthday check into a hand bag. I took nothing of Bob's; I hated him and wanted never to see him again. When I reached the sidewalk, I looked back, but the house presented a blank, uninterested front. Evidently nobody knew I'd gone out. I hailed the first taxi I saw, stopping downtown at an obscure little drug store to call up Bob and tell him, quite levelly, that a girl with the name Thrace Willard on her underclothes had just been taken to the morgue. Then I ordered cabby to drive to the station at top speed. Here I went in, bought a ticket for a train that fortunately was due in fifteen minutes, and boarded it when it came in.

Well, anyway, I was saved actual suicide! Thank Heaven for that! I sank into my seat with a sigh of relief, grateful for the flash of inspiration that had suggested Horace Easterly. He had been a friend of mother's long ago, and had never liked dad—probably because mother preferred dad to him—and consequently wasn't on speaking terms with him. He was now head of one of the biggest daily newspaper concerns in the country. One set of offices was in Bouvert, six or seven hundred miles away. I'd decided to go to him, because I'd always wanted to be a reporter, anyway.

Everybody—Olivia especially—considered me merely a charming parasite; well, I'd show them. I knew very well I had brains, whether any one else did or not. Thank Heaven, I was *free*! At last I could begin to live my own life!

During that journey, I thought of Dolly Page a lot, and I wept a few surreptitious tears at her untimely demise. I refused to think about Bob at all.

In Bouvert I went first to Mr. Easterly's office, and though I had only the clothes I was wearing, in spite of my grief and disillusionment, I suppose I looked rather nice and not at all like a working girl. Mr. Easterly, by a stroke of luck, was in town, and I was shown at once to his private office.

He's quite a lovely-looking old gentleman, with iron-gray hair, mild brown eyes, and a firm, square jaw. He was sitting before a desk writing, and I must have given him an awful start when the door opened, for he sat there staring at me without speaking, his pen still in midair.

When I'm excited, I talk all the time; my words tumble over each other and only a mind reader could guess what I'm driving at. Mr. Easterly said, "Tut, tut, child!" several times, patted me on my shoulder, and made me sit in an easy-chair. But he kept looking at me in that dazed way.

"Please tell me all about it. We're both calmer now, aren't we? So this is little Thrace Gray grown up! When you first came in, you looked so much like Alice—like your mother—my breath was taken away for an instant. Well, well—now what's the trouble?"

Wasn't it lovely of him to be so sympathetic and patient while I had hysterics of the worst sort? I told him, and by degrees made him understand, that I was a dead woman. My body was lying back home in the morgue. Thrace Willard was no more.

I think that, in spite of the seriousness of the situation, Mr. Easterly wanted to smile. But he didn't. He kept shaking his head and sorrowfully murmuring, "Tk—tk—tk!"

"Very sad," he agreed. "Very sad indeed. So you have lost your love for your husband? Well, no woman should be compelled to live with a man she doesn't love, to be sure. But do you think you can really pass for dead? Such a hue and cry will be raised—"

"Of course. But they'll never look for me here. And nobody cared about Dolly Page—not even her own mother. She'll never be missed. I'm going to change my name, anyway. I thought it all out on the train. Henceforth, I shall be Rachel Rosemary. Isn't it an adorable name for a writer? For I'm going to write for your paper, you know."

"Hm—very nice. The name, though—wouldn't you consider it a bit spectacular? 'Sarah Johnson' or 'Maude Jones' would be more disguising. The 'Rosemary' is so obviously an alias. You're rather too good looking to call attention to yourself in any way."

"Oh, do you think so? I hate 'Sarah,' and 'Jones' is *ghastly*, but it shall be as you say. Now, when am I to begin work?"

"But I haven't O. K'd your application yet, my dear! Let's get this straight. You want to be a—a corpse, is that it?"

"I want to *stay* one. Please help me, Mr. Easterly! I shall have to go back to Bob if you don't. You have no idea how determined—how utterly stubborn—that man is. If he had any idea I was living, he—he'd track me to my lair!" I added dramatically. "I've left him forever."

"But—ah—couldn't one recognize the body of one's own wife?"

"Oh, but she's *exactly* like me! Olivia didn't see it, because she was looking only at the clothes, but the resemblance is remarkable. Then she was bloated, too, which might make a difference——"

This was getting gruesome, and I shivered. But Mr. Easterly seemed lost in thought. At length he said:

"My dear, are you sure this isn't just a lovers' quarrel?"

"Perfectly! I am done with love forever! I ask only to be allowed to work. I shall bury my sorrow in useful labor."

He got up, then—and I thought once that his eyes were twinkling, but when he looked at me, he was preternaturally grave.

"I hope to become a great writer," I said. "This office is to be my lowly beginning."

He really did smile, openly, at that.

"Now, Miss Sarah Jones, here's my proposition: Get yourself some decent, quiet clothes first, and put away that imported suit and those thousand-dollar furs you are wearing. You look like Mrs. Astorbilt bound for the *matinée*. And stop wearing your hair in that extremely becoming, but unbusinesslike, fashion, and put away your make-up box. When you've done that, you may go into the office as a sort of general assistant for two months. If, at the end of that time, you still want to 'play dead'—well, we'll see about that later."

"Now you understand, don't you, that you're a poor working girl in a strange city? You don't know me at all, save as an employer. You'll be expected to learn your job without having any favors shown you, and your salary will be small. You'll have to live on it, though, and I shall expect you to *work*. On these conditions alone am I willing to become *particeps criminis*."

It sounded severe, but I was sure it would be loads of fun, and I almost hugged him in my gratitude. But he waved me back.

"You may as well," he suggested, "remove your wedding ring, since you are Miss Sarah Jones."

I took it off, hastily.

"I meant to discard it, anyway." I dropped it and its blazing solitaire complement into my hand bag.

"You must have those clothes at once. Shall I make a small advance on your salary?"

"Oh, no," I put in hastily. "I've some money left from dad's last check."

Shall I shop in the department stores?" I'd always gone to the most expensive *couturières*.

He frowned ever so slightly when I mentioned dad.

"Is your poor father to believe you dead?"

That was rather a facer. You see, I'd hardly thought of dad's side of it. But I argued bravely:

"If dad knew, he'd force me to go back to Bob. I'll die before I'll live with that man another day! But of course daddy mustn't suffer. I'll write him a little note at once saying: 'Alive and well. But if you attempt to look for me, will not answer for the consequences.' Mightn't that do?"

"But he'd be sure to tell Bob."

"Oh, dear, I didn't dream dying was so complicated! Well, I'll say, 'If Bob is told of this, I shall never return.'"

"You *do* mean to return?"

"Quietly and secretly, to see dad, perhaps. I'm all he has. But I shall never look on Robert Willard's face again!"

So the thing was settled. I bought a "working girl's" outfit—I was very careful in my selection, so it wasn't really unbecoming—and was introduced into the office as a beginner.

How that tired-looking crowd stared! It was positively embarrassing, but having made up my mind to elevate the tone of the office, I put on my quietest, most dignified manner. The first thing they gave me was a lot of stuff to get ready for the printer. I realized my lack of qualifications when I had to admit that I couldn't read proof. Somebody had already started that article with queer, cabalistic marks that depressed one just to look at them. I felt disgraced, for I saw several of the men and one catty-looking woman raise their eyebrows, as if wondering what I was there for.

But one young fellow of about eighteen, whom everybody called "the

Kid," came over to me with a book open at "Proofreaders' Marks."

"It won't take you no time at all to learn 'em, miss," he said awkwardly. "And when you've once got 'em, there you are!"

He wasn't a good-looking boy, being red-headed, snub-nosed, with spectacular freckles, but he had such a frank, honest, lovable look about him that I felt at once I had a friend at court. And so I had, as after events proved.

I shall pass over the humiliating, nerve-racking first two weeks of my apprenticeship. And I want to say right here that if I'd been the ball of fluff everybody thought me, two weeks would have been enough. But I gritted my teeth, shook my fist at fate, and made up my mind to learn things. It was a shock to find out how stupid and conceited I really was.

At first, it seemed strange to say meekly and merely when Mr. Easterly came into the office: "Good morning, sir," and pass on as if I'd never seen him before, but I quickly got used to that. But one morning a tall, fine-looking man, with gray eyes and wonderful fair hair, came limping in with Mr. Easterly. He was the sort of man every woman dreams about at some time in her life.

"Miss Jones, this is" John Stone, a returned war correspondent whom a shell fragment sent home to hospital," Mr. Easterly said casually as they reached my desk. "He's to do a special series for us. You'll find him tremendously interesting."

He presented him in turn to the others.

Mr. Stone was the most fascinating man to talk to I'd ever met. After Mr. Easterly left, he came over and sat by me and asked questions, and talked of his experiences on the battlefields of Europe. He said that as soon as he was physically fit, he was going

back to the trenches, that there was a thrill in war one got nowhere else.

Well, after that John Stone was in the office quite as if he belonged there. Sometimes he'd sit at a corner desk and write, with the newspaper man's obliviousness to clacking typewriters and pounding machinery; sometimes he'd pore over his own manuscript without writing a word; often he'd just sit and smoke and stare out of the window.

The Kid didn't like him. He said so quite frankly. He told me Jack Stone thought he owned the earth with a fence around it. But that was prejudice, for Mr. Stone had too keen a sense of humor to be an egoist.

For a long time, whenever anybody called me Miss Jones, I regretted Rachel Rosemary's banishment. Just to hear Mr. Easterly say it, instantly visioned me as one of a family brood, born Jones and proud of it. He was a pretty good actor, old Mr. Easterly, and I think my anomalous position amused him.

After a month, I began gradually to "get onto the ropes," and to be of some use about the place. They sent me out to report small fires and fights and things like that. The society editor ordered me to social affairs sometimes when they were trivial or she was more than ordinarily busy. I proved clever enough at that to be trusted with the wedding of Miss Van Rensaeller-Smith, that Diana-Minerva creature who took the golf honors of the year, played polo, tooled, and all that. She was nearly six feet tall, and every step she took measured four feet. Yet, in my description of the wedding, I spoke feelingly of the swanlike grace with which she glided to the altar.

I wrote up neighborhood fights, births, fires, and marriages; and on one occasion I was told to "beat it" to a place somewhere in the slums where a stabbing affray had just taken

place. If it was worth it, I was to telephone back to the office. As I was skillful in managing a car, the police reporter turned over his cherished little Ford to me, and I sailed round corners and across streets with a gay disregard of cops and human life.

Alas, there was no "scoop!" Mrs. Angelina Argelotti had tried to stab her husband with a kitchen knife. The knife being dull, the results had been misleading in appearance, but he had howled bloody murder and had half the phones in that quarter ringing. When Mrs. Angelina found I was a reporter, her rage took a divergent form. She "hate-a da woman suffs," she said—and she started at me with that fearful knife! I made a dive for the Ford, missed it, and broke my fall on a nice, fat policeman who was panting along to arrest me for reckless driving. It stunned him a little, but I'm sure he eventually recovered. The second leap for the Ford was successful, and I arrived at the office disheveled, scoopless, but grateful that I was still alive.

Daily experiences like these hardened me to the fact that I was Sarah Jones on a skimpy salary; even inured me to my boarding house, where a rigid landlady handed out food with the air of doing one a special favor. Even my fellow boarders—people of a kind I'd never in all my life been thrown with—gradually took on a human aspect.

There were times, of course, when I longed for the fleshpots and wept over my disappointment in Bob. More than once, thinking of how Bob's hair curled up at the edges, I went to sleep crying. But later, when thoughts like these bothered me, John Stone's quiet, fair face always came between and blotted out Bob's. In fact, these days, I found myself thinking of John Stone pretty constantly. Busy though I was, I began writing, at night, little snatches of things that had happened during the

day. I called it "The Diary of a Dead Woman." Looking back, I see that Stone was the motif that prompted it. Here's a sample entry:

"*April 10th.* April! Here in this dingy old office, where there's nothing but noise and confusion, it's hard to realize that spring is here. But to-day Jack and I walked together in the park, and saw the green leaves getting ready to burst into prodigal beauty, the grass growing velvety underfoot, bluebirds darting here and there. Down South, they call this 'bluebird weather.' I love that phrase. It means so much, for the bluebird stands for happiness, too.

"I never knew a more wonderful person than Mr. Stone. He has a way of making the simplest thing thrillingly interesting. He talks a great deal, but always brilliantly, and I walk along beside him feeling very small and insignificant indeed. He says, when he first saw me, he thought I was too pretty to have any brains, but now that he knows me better, he sees that his first judgment was unjust. We are amazingly congenial."

"*April 15th.* Mr. Easterly congratulated me to-day on my work. He said I'd gone beyond his expectations, but of course I needn't regard myself as a Paul Thompson yet. And he mentioned, rather irritably, that my working-girl clothes are growing shabby. This just as I was congratulating myself on having obtained the proper viewpoint!

"You've been here over two months. Your pretty clothes suit you amazingly—and one can be young but once. Hadn't you better go back to them—and Bob?"

"I—haven't I made good?" I faltered.

"Oh, astonishingly! But aren't you wasting your young life here with us?"

"Wasting! Why, for the first time

since I was born, I'm really living! And besides," I added with a smile, "you forget I'm still *dead*."

"He sighed and went away. Dad has given no sign that he ever heard from me, and Bob apparently considers himself a widower. I wanted to know if the papers were full of my death, but I shrank from bringing up the gruesome topic, and Mr. Easterly didn't mention it. Of course, though, they were!"

"*April 20th.* Why is it some men's faces just *thrill* you? There's a something in them—kind, clever, but quite controlled, and when they look at you, such swift *tenderness*. Oh, well, I may as well admit that I'm thinking of Jack Stone. He is wonderful, fascinating, real. At first I used to have the sensation that he was too good to be true, and I wanted to reach out my hand and touch him, to make sure that he was there, but recently he is almost always there. And I haven't questioned why I am so utterly, unreasonably happy until to-day. Even the inky, smoky, stuffy smell of the newspaper office is bearable. The thundering of the big presses, the busy men with green eyeshades, the rushing messenger boys—all the chaotic upheaval of it has become just a setting for Jack Stone's personality.

"To-day, after work hours, we walked home together, stopping for hot rolls and coffee at a funny little shop Jack himself discovered. With the one light hanging just above, casting fantastic shadows on his mobile face, he talked of many things; but afterward I remembered that most of our conversation had to do with him—his hopes and aims and needs. He is divinely selfish—that charming absorption in self that all temperamental people have. It doesn't irritate in him, because he is beautifully frank and sincere.

"He said that he loved all exquisite

things—dawn and twilight and gay colors and the light in old wine, but that he needed most "music and day-dreams and adventure.

"And work, too," I added.

"Work, yes. And there is something else."

"I waited for him to go on, and when he did not, I asked:

"And that is—"

"The pressure of a sympathetic woman's arms about my neck."

"And then, when my heart began to thump and I was afraid to lift my eyes, I knew that this was no longer friendship. In shamed panic, I thought of Bob, and remembered that I wasn't really Sarah Jones—I'd almost come to believe I *was* Sarah!—so I jumped up and said I must go.

"He said nothing more till we were nearly at my door, but I knew that he knew I was tinglingly aware of his nearness.

"Good night, my dear," he said quietly—the way we all dream of having some man say it—and he turned and walked away. Of course I couldn't sleep at all that night. What woman could?

"I must not see him any more alone. After all, though I have left him forever, I am still Bob's wife. He is entitled to my loyalty. I must not allow this man, fascinating though he is, to blind me to Bob's many admirable qualities."

Things had reached this pass when the terrible summer heat came on. It was devastating. I, who had only known heat mitigated by every modern aid to comfort, fairly withered under it. I thought of the dim, cool, lovely rooms I'd left, the awnings with the window boxes of ferns below, the spray whirling on the velvety lawn outside, the restful, still peace of it all.

In the office, a very inferno of heat and confusion reigned. My enthusiasm

lagged. The Kid, seeing that I was losing "pep," became tentatively consolatory.

"It's this ghastly weather." He looked at me keenly. "Why don't you throw it up for a few weeks and rest?"

I shook my head, though I was terribly homesick—for just what I didn't know, and wouldn't admit it.

"Look here—if Stone's at the bottom of this, cut it! He's the prize philanthropist. He says 'affairs' are all that keep him from going stale, that every new love means at least one piece of fine work done."

"Stop it!" I flared. "What right have you to say such things? Did he tell *you*?" My scorn was withering.

"No. But he said 'em all right. Some men are like that—and women, too. They've got to have new experiences to make 'em go, same as an auto needs gas, see? I ain't holdin' no brief for 'em. They're just a bit off the norm, maybe. But I don't want you sacrificed to a man like that."

I was angry—so furiously angry that I ignored the Kid for a couple of days afterward. Of course I didn't accept a word of his estimate of Jack. He was prejudiced—that was all. Nevertheless, probably because Stone was out of town for a week, I felt blue and depressed.

Next day Mr. Easterly raised my salary, and recommended the purchase of some new clothes and a month's vacation in the mountains. I had to decline the last, of course, for there was practically no resort proof from vacationing friends sure to recognize a lady supposed to be dead.

He called me back as I was about to leave.

"My dear, I see you seem to know John Stone pretty well. Interesting chap, of course, but— isn't it just as well to remember that you are really Mrs. Willard?"

Et tu, Brute!

"No one here knows it."

"Of course not. I'm not interfering, only—you mustn't take Miss Sarah Jones too literally, you know."

Afterward, I thought over what he'd said. He was an old dear, but there *had* been something just a little peculiar in his manner that I couldn't account for.

It was due to the Kid, perhaps, that a paper from home lay uppermost on my desk, with a certain article marked. How was he to know that the social news could interest me—especially the doings of Mr. Bob Willard? Bob was evidently quite gay these days. Here he was reported as having opened a dance with "the beautiful Miss Rosamund Lathrone;" in another column he was spoken of as having attended a house party at the Lathrone home.

Now, if there is one person more than another whom I detest, it is Rosamund Lathrone. To begin with, she is one of those cooing, gurgling, flattering creatures that women loathe and men adore. She is a beauty—even I have to admit that—and she has always frankly admired Bob. Report had it that they were once engaged. She had shown me plainly, more than once, that she considered me a sort of second fiddle. Why, oh, why should Bob, who was supposed to be mourning a dead wife, be making himself conspicuous with this woman?

I was so worried over this that when Jack Stone came back, it was a blessed relief, even though I'd renounced him in my mind. Remembering Bob and his social activities, I was filled with a wild desire to "get even." If Bob could forget, so could I.

Moonlight and a lake is a deadly combination, but that night, when Jack Stone and I reached the beach just as the searchlight was turned on the bathers—making a Rembrandtesque pool of light, while outside all was shadows and moving flashes shot

through with gay laughter—I was glad to be there. Something in me thrilled to the night and the water and the laughter. We went far out on the lake in a boat, and afterward sat on the beach in the warm sand, while Jack quoted poetry and told me of far Orient nights, of days in the trenches, of old legends woven about half-forgotten mysteries. Transformed by the alchemy of this man's charm, I forgot Bob altogether. Some young people over beyond the ropes began to sing, "If it Takes a Thousand Years," and all the thrill of forgotten romance was in my blood again. I wanted to be young and unhampered and free to be kissed—and to kiss back.

"If one could take the mood of a moment and set it to the music of a lifetime!" he said ruefully. "But one breathes rarified atmosphere only now and then. And always, in between, he is wishing again for the stars' height. One needs inspiration—and it comes so rarely."

We went home in rather an exalted mood. At my door, he held my hands for rather a long time.

"Kiss me good night, little beloved," he said abruptly—quite simply, too, as only those serious, tender men can say it.

And then his arms were round me, my face pressed closed to that adorable smooth, lean cheek of his, and he kissed me as I had never in all my life been kissed before, while he whispered something about the stars and the night and the warm winds of heaven—and the unutterable sweetness of a woman's mouth.

One o'clock! Not until the clock struck with a nerve-waking clatter did I recall the copy that lay unfinished on my desk in the office, which I'd promised to have ready for the morning edition. Romance is one thing, business another. I'd have to run over to the office and lick it quickly into

shape. My mental perturbation of that afternoon had played me the shabby trick of making me forget.

I threw on my coat, pinned on my hat, and hurried downstairs. The office, fortunately, was only two blocks away, and I had a pass-key. I found the worrisome copy, finished it, and was going out as quietly as I'd come in, when Jack Stone's office coat, hanging over his desk, arrested my attention.

How utterly lifelike, a part of him, it looked! Under the light, his disorderly desk showed cluttered, yet workmanlike. I reached up to give the coat a little fleeting caress, and in doing so knocked a mass of papers to the floor. I gathered them up and was hurriedly replacing them when a softly colored lavender sheet, sprawled over with a woman's handwriting—angular, beautifully clear—stopped me with the words, "*Oh, my beloved*—" as if a voice had called to me.

I know no thoroughly self-respecting person will read another's letter. But that "*Oh, my beloved*" was like the flick of a whip! I couldn't go away leaving that lily-scented, violet-colored thing there, ignorant of what those words meant. And in an instant I saw. It was from a woman who had loved him and whom he had loved:

"*Oh, my beloved—my beloved—that I should know, at the last, that I have been only an 'inspiration' to you! Any woman wants to inspire a man—but to be only that! To be used just to stir the lazy imagination, the stagnant senses, then thrown away when you've served your little purpose and have been put into print! To be told that you must needs have 'the pressure of a sympathetic woman's arms about your neck' in order to write at all! Mine were the arms about your neck—and now you have voluntarily loosed them. Are there other arms somewhere more beautifully stimulating to the creative*

fancy? I have no more to give you. There are no longer any thrills.

"But I love you! Oh, my God, Jack, I love you! May He forgive you for thus making 'copy' of a woman's broken heart!"

The violet, lily-scented sheet fluttered to the floor. I picked it up, put it back carefully, and left the office without looking back at the loose, creased coat that smelled faintly of violets and cigar smoke.

I must have looked "seedier" than usual next morning, for the Kid hung about me in shy, embarrassed sympathy, offering to help with my work.

"You ought to get out of town," he insisted. "You're all in, honest."

Later in the day, I was summoned to Mr. Easterly's office. The moment the door opened, he exclaimed:

"Thrace, you must go home!"

"But what—"

"Your husband's going to marry Rosamund Lathrone!"

I'm afraid I looked rather foolish for a minute—I felt dizzy and queer—but I heard everything he said as if each word had been cut out and framed. I held on to the table and waited breathlessly.

"You can't let him marry, believing you dead. You must go back at once and tell him the truth."

"But"—I think I swayed a little; I know I kept getting dizzier and dizzier—"if he loves her—it will ruin his happiness—"

"Nonsense! Propinquity, probably. Anyway, there's always divorce. Run along and get ready, Thrace. I'm going to take you to the train."

There was no time to faint. I ran for my hat instead.

Having put me into the train, kissed me, and washed his hands of me, Mr. Easterly left me to my fate. I felt alone—and frightened—and yet somehow strangely thrilled. Though Bob

had forgotten me, I knew that the thrill came from the fact that I was to see him again.

At the house there is a side entrance opening out into the roses and lilies of the garden, and I went cautiously through this, straight to Bob's den. And there he sat, looking a bit lonely and puffing at a big cigar. He was so dear and sane and wholesome looking—so satisfyingly a *man*, with no need for neurotic stimulation of the senses or being inspired by a woman's tears—that my heart just tumbled over itself and went out to him.

"Bob!"

He turned his head when I cried out—and then I saw that no matter how many Rosamund Lathrones he meant to marry, he still *loved me!* Strangely enough, he didn't look startled to see the dead alive. He just held out his arms, smiling, and I went into them—and into hysterics—sobbing out that he was mine, that no other woman should have him.

It was a full hour before there was a particle of coherence in anything we said. And then I found—will you believe it?—that instead of scheming suc-

cessfully, I'd been successfully schemed against! For the day I reached Bouver, Mr. Easterly had talked to both dad and Bob over long distance, and between them they'd arranged to let me have what Bob called my "little fling." Anyway, it wasn't Dolly Page who was taken to the morgue, but a perfect stranger! So there was no mystery for Bob in the affair.

I told him about Jack Stone, and he looked solemn for a moment, but said that sort of man was perfectly harmless if one didn't take him seriously. And he admitted that he'd never for a moment thought of Miss Lathrone other than as a pleasant acquaintance; but I was supposed to be away just on a visit that mustn't prove indefinite, and, anyway, Mr. Easterly had thought I was running down physically and, wanting to get me out of the office, had had to resort to questionable tactics. *Would* you believe he'd do such a thing?

I am very happy. My husband and I will *never* quarrel again! Just as children "play dead" only to wake up, I have come alive to the fact that there is only Bob in all the world.

REFORMATION

SHE intended to be a spinster, for she detested noisy boys and teasing, fretful girl children. Men she considered bossy and overbearing, and women slaves to their husbands' caprices. Then the right lover slipped a ring on her finger, and now she has a home in the suburbs, six children, and a firm belief that she is the happiest woman in the world.

REINCARNATION

WHEN I was a cave man, I came with a hatchet of stone, a lion's skin thrown about my brawny shoulders, and made you love me. When I was an Indian, I took you by force and rode away with you to my tepee, having bought you from your father with a spotted pony. Now you look at my closely shaven chin and my narrow shoulders and despise me for the weakling I am. Your father will give you a dowry, and I shall establish you in a Fifth Avenue home, and in due time we shall fall asleep in death, neither of us knowing that in our last reincarnation we missed the one great experience of life.

Appearance *and* the Liver

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

THE liver is the largest and most prominent gland in the body. It is a highly intricate, complicated organ performing many remarkable functions, a chemical laboratory wherein the elements of digested foods are differentiated and accepted for use or rejected. Whatever enters the body of a deleterious nature is "passed upon" by the liver. It is also a storehouse for such materials as are required for the upkeep of energy. The master tissues of the body are the muscular and the nervous; all the other tissues may be regarded as the servants of these. In order that these two master tissues may be supported with the least possible effort or labor, that they may perform their own supreme functions in the highest possible manner, it is necessary that food and other substances entering the system be highly elaborated. The processes through which such material goes are of too intricate a nature to dilate on here; it is sufficient to say that the liver plays a major rôle in these matters.

Many disorders of this remarkable gland result from ignorance of its wonderful functions. Indeed, its situation in the abdominal cavity is unknown to a great many. Now the liver occupies far more space than is generally supposed; for instance, it lies upon the upper right side of the abdomen, being

separated from the right lung by the diaphragm. "Nature abhors a vacuum." The diaphragm being dome-shaped, the liver fits accurately into it, and is packed nicely into this concavity, so that its uppermost convexity is on a line with the fourth rib. Portions of it extend down to the space between the tenth and eleventh ribs. Anteriorly the liver lies in front of the stomach, between it and the abdominal wall extending from the breastbone midway to the navel, crossing past the middle line of the body, and encroaching to the left upon the pancreas and lower border of the heart.

It will now be seen what amazing changes both as to location and shape are produced in this organ by the permanent pressure of clothing. These conditions are not as marked to-day as in those periods when tight lacing and hourglass figures were fashionable. In some instances, when tight lacing was pursued for many consecutive years, and steady and continuous compression was practiced to acquire the hourglass shape, the liver was practically cut in two, one portion extending down until it dipped into the pelvic basin, the liver substance at the line of compression being completely obliterated, only a band of connective tissue, with bile ducts and blood vessels, remaining. To a lesser degree, this is accomplished in every

case in which pressure of any kind is exerted, be it by means of corsets, bands, or belts. In order that this highly important organ may perform its manifold functions in the most efficient manner, there must be no constriction of its substance.

The liver is highly vascular and has an intricate circulation peculiar to itself, in this respect differing from other organs in the body. During digestion, there is a rapid influx of blood, which is of course merely transient, but which, in cases of overindulgences in eating or drinking, may become the cause of functional or even organic disease. Overeating and the habitual use of spices, table condiments, coffee, and alcoholics keep up a continual state of congestion that is augmented by sedentary habits. Active congestion of the liver is always present in general plethora—full-bloodedness—and in obesity, and is usually associated with gout, gravel, and an affection known as glycosuria. Passive congestion is a much more common condition than the active form. Whatever interferes with the general circulation in the body gives rise to this state. Chronic heart and kidney troubles always involve the liver.

In cases of congestion of this organ, there is a feeling of pressure and fullness throughout the liver region, and sometimes actual pain made worse by movement, deep breathing or pressure. This sensation of fullness with pain is almost invariably attributed to digestive disorders and referred to the stomach, because, to the lay mind, the stomach occupies the seat of the trouble.

Now there are some symptoms referable to the digestion, such as epigastric weight, heart-burn, flatulence, and fullness in the head. These symptoms occur with periodical regularity, in some cases being associated with the appearance or suppression of menstruation, and as, hemorrhoids result from a chronically congested liver, the arrest

of a hemorrhoidal flux is often the forerunner of the symptoms outlined above.

A person who suffers from congested liver complains of an increase in the pain when he walks upstairs; whereas it is much less marked when he walks downstairs. Struggling against the wind, running, in short every physical exercise, increases the suffering. The treatment depends upon the cause. Since it may be secondary to some other condition, it follows that treatment must be directed to the primary cause. However, here, as elsewhere in the body, prophylaxis or prevention is of supreme importance. Care should be taken never to overload the stomach, never to throw too much work upon the liver by foolish indulgence in deleterious foods and drink, to select a diet that is at once highly assimilable and nourishing, and to drink plenty of good clear water, at least six glassfuls in every twenty-four hours.

When the condition of congestion actually exists as a result of an unhygienic dietary, it stands to reason that one's course in this respect must be radically changed, and in addition to a simplified diet, exercise must be systematically pursued. Breathing exercises which give the liver a form of passive massage are excellent.

Many persons whose health is otherwise good occasionally suffer from gastrointestinal depressions and slight discoloration of the eyeballs and skin. Relief is usually experienced after mild purgation and fasting for a day or two. Abstinence from food, whether willful or due to a loss of appetite, sometimes gives rise to a wave of jaundice, as it were. It is fleeting, and passes away when the appetite is reestablished. In these instances, the phenomena may be psychic or emotional; we have probably all witnessed manifestations of a jaundiced state following sudden fright, terror, or intense anger.

There are some conditions of poisoning that develop jaundice, as snake bites, for instance. Some of the vermifuges give rise to it; also phosphorus and lead. There is a form of epidemic jaundice seen when a number of persons are living in a community, such as a camp, barracks, boarding school, or prison. Under these circumstances, it has been ascribed to atmospheric or climatic conditions, dietetic faults, and infectious causes. It has been known to last for months. During pregnancy and parturition, epidemic jaundice may be very grave, so that pregnant women should be removed from communities upon the first appearance of this trouble.

Catarrhal jaundice is a common affection, one of the most frequent causes of which is malaria. To the lay mind, the discolored skin in chronic malaria is attributed to some very absurd reasons, especially in those sections where malaria abounds. In the acute variety of this affection, the cause is often very obscure. One may become aware of it only by observing one's startling jaundiced visage in the mirror, or by the surprised exclamations of one's friends. More often, however, there are unpleasant symptoms such as headache, nausea, and vomiting, as well as a distressing itching of the skin and drowsiness.

There are many diseases of a grave nature in which jaundice is an associated feature, but simple, uncomplicated catarrhal jaundice is a benign affection and readily yields to appropriate treatment. Indeed, it passes off without treatment of any kind except hygiene—that is, a course of mineral waters, diet, baths, and exercise. A teaspoonful of sodium phosphate in a tumbler of hot water, taken slowly upon an empty stomach a half hour before meals, is an excellent substitute for the waters or salts of Karlsbad or Vichy. The diet should be very light and free from

all fats, consisting of milk, gruels, toast, crackers, potatoes; a small amount of meat with green vegetables may gradually be added. Exercise is extremely serviceable in aiding the flow of bile into the intestines, especially stimulation of the diaphragm by means of deep breathing. If the sufferer is weak, fresh air and deep-breathing exercises should be lightly, but frequently, indulged in. For the strong, such sports as necessitate enforced deep breathing are advised. The above suggestions on hygienic measures are especially applicable to those afflicted with periodic "bilious spells."

The hue of the skin is a color index. The body color is largely dependent on bile pigment. What is bile? An antiseptic, digestive fluid, manufactured by the liver cells and passed out through the hepatic duct into the gall sac, where it is retained until released by the act of digestion. The color of the bile in man is generally a bright golden red. The chemical reaction of bile is alkaline; on coming into contact with the gastric juice, which is acid, the color of bile is changed to a yellow green. Bile that is retained for a long time in the gall bladder may become a deep green. Its normal color is due to the presence of bile pigments, and especially to an iron pigment that results from the breaking up in the liver of red-blood corpuscles. This pigment forms one of the constituents of gallstones and stains the tissues yellow in jaundice. When the liver fails to functionate actively, much of the coloring matter taken into the body is indifferently handled by this marvelous gland, which is one of the reasons why the skin of many persons has lost its rosy hue.

The original source of all color bearing mineral, it is easy to realize the vital need of minerals in our everyday dietary, and how far from health and a beautiful color the demineralization of foods has taken us, in the past twenty-

five years especially. We speak of pale and anæmic persons as being "white-livered," and of those poorly endowed with a high moral sense, of weak moral fiber, of cowards and cravens, as "white-livered," too; and this is literally true, for color has a moral as well as a health significance.

The chemistry performed by the liver is beyond the scope of our present scientific knowledge. It receives all coloring matter, whether through the processes of digestion, from the blood, or through the air, and disposes of it, while the function of bile is manifold; beside having some action upon the digestion of food, it also receives the end products of the liver's chemical analyses—bile pigments—and passes these out of the body. To what extent bile pigments are thrown into the system by an inactive liver or by disease of the gall bladder is manifested in various ways; the color of the skin reveals it, while our feelings display it. Most of the primary colors are felt, tasted, and seen when bile overflows its natural channels, while we truly indicate a hopeless state of the mind—and a disordered liver—by the expression, "I feel as blue as indigo." Which brings us to the remarkable influence of a disordered liver upon the disposition.

Psychology is not a new study, and physiological psychology is many centuries old, but we of to-day are just beginning to understand the relationships between the mind and the functions of the various organs, or, in fact, that the mind does not reside in the brain alone, but in every tissue, which explains the power of mind over matter. At one time, the heart was believed to be the seat of emotional life; so ingrained was this belief that we still use such phrases as "It breaks my heart," and "My heart is heavy with its weight of woe," and so on and so on. The heart does share largely in our higher feelings, but few know that the liver is directly respon-

sible for one of our most extraordinary faculties—*hope*.

Physiognomical studies of the human face and form convince us that hope is dependent upon the normal action of a strong and healthy liver. When this powerful gland is free from all inherited weakness, and is functioning actively, a high quality of hope characterizes the individual. Those in whom the liver is defective are possessed of gloomy spirits, are of a cheerless temperament, of hopeless and pessimistic views; they can attribute their unfortunate inheritance to jaundiced ancestors who gorged themselves with food and drink. On the other hand, those in whom this faculty runs high, like a steady beacon blazing a dauntless way through a life of achievement, are blessed with an ancestry whose moral obligations to future generations were conscientiously performed.

That function of the liver whereby coloring matter, minerals, and poisons are transmuted, rendered innocuous, or entirely disposed of, is a property of this gland that was quite well recognized by the ancients. Biblical writers referred to "bowels of mercy" and "the gall of bitterness," evidencing their ability to correlate hopelessness and bitterness of spirit with an overflow of the gall bladder. That the liver plays a prominent rôle in molding one's disposition or nature was recognized ages ago by Hippocrates, who formulated the four great classifications of mankind into sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic, which classification of mankind remained the standard for ages.

Although ancient authorities observed many truths in nature which we are just beginning to resurrect, they did not connect the sympathetic nervous system with the liver, which makes their knowledge of this wonderful relationship and its influence all the more remarkable.

Allusion has been made to a condition of glycosuria, which is an extremely interesting condition in its bearing upon the appearance. Glycogen is a form of sugar manufactured in and stored up by the liver for the body's need as this arises. The cells of the liver make glycogen out of sugars and starches mostly, although, when these foods are withdrawn—for instance, in diabetes—a certain amount of sugar is still made from proteid food.

Now, beside manufacturing this substance, the liver cells also convert it into fat or heat units. During warm weather, when comparatively little internal heat is required, there is less glycogen stored in the liver than during the colder seasons. An excess of fats and starchy food at any time leads to engorgement of this remarkable gland, to an oversupply of fat in the system, to obesity, and similar derangements, as well as to serious interference with other functions vital to the system.

Now, under perfectly normal conditions—that is to say, when one is living hygienically, both as to body and mind, with strict attention to diet and so on—there is no overflow or surplus amount of sugar accumulated in the system. When gorged with excess foods, particularly fat-producing foods, we become very much like Strasburg geese, the livers of which are made to attain an almost unbelievably enormous size for purposes of creating that delectable delicacy, *paté de foie gras*.

It was the Strasburg geese, nailed to the floor by their webbed feet and stuffed with cornmeal and similar fat-

producing foods, that gave the charming Geraldine Farrar a vision of her future self unless an immediate halt was called on sedentary habits and indulgence in rich foods. So well did she apply the lesson that so dire a catastrophe as fat and disordered functions will probably never overwhelm this charming songstress. Beauty of face and form, a sparkling optimism, a joy in life, characterize this lovely and gifted woman.

How can these desirable qualities be maintained as well as acquired? The first consideration is absolute freedom of the body from all constriction. Clothes must be worn in such a manner that the noble organs—especially those situated, as is the liver, directly in the waistline—can function freely. Then systematic deep breathing must be employed as a corrective to a feebly acting liver, while exercise in the open air must form part of each day's regimen. A diet consisting largely of greens, fruits, olive oil, and coarse cereals is best suited to the health of this gland, together with plenty of water. If one's special condition demands mineral waters, these should be selected with great care. Chronically discolored complexions, discolored eyeballs, periodic bilious attacks, and melancholic temperaments may thus be completely regenerated, but not in a day or a month.

Note: Treatment for functional liver derangements, bitter waters, creams for liver spots, and the like, as well as special diet lists, will be sent to readers upon request.

WHAT READERS ASK

MRS. A. R. T.—I have had an unusual number of letters on the subject of abnormal perspiration—these letters coming from all parts of the country—and explain it on the hypothesis that through war conditions people are keyed up to the highest pitch. The sacrifices we are making, the stupendous amount of work we are performing, and the

consequent ebb and flow of the emotions, combine to create a loss of tone in the vasomotor—sympathetic—nerves. When these are markedly relaxed, the skin leaks. Feebly acting lungs and kidneys throw an extra amount of work on the skin. I suggest to all who suffer in this manner a cold, salt-water rubdown the first thing on arising,

special breathing exercises—these will be mailed on proper application—and six glassfuls of water, to be taken between meals during the course of every twenty-four hours. An excellent lotion for general and local use consists of:

Alum 4 drams
Dilute acetic acid 4 ounces
Water to make 16 ounces
Sponge the body several times daily.

SARA J.—Your question is an interesting one. Cosmetics frequently promote a growth of hair, because they act as irritants and so stimulate the latent hair follicles present in all skin. At birth the entire body is covered with a downy growth that disappears in a few days. These hairs are called *lanugo*, and it is evident that the roots never wholly perish.

MAMIE X.—The throat and, therefore, the voice can be wonderfully strengthened by gargling frequently during the day with cold salt water and sponging the neck for ten minutes at a time with cold water. Sea salt added to the external local bath is very helpful.

Mrs. A. D. Fox.—Poultices are applied to give heat and moisture to a painful part. Flaxseed is generally used, but bread, mush, or hops will answer just as well. While poultices relieve pain, they are also used to hasten suppuration—to bring an abscess to a head. They are not used as much as in former years.

AN ADMIRER.—Electrolysis is a painless and rapidly effective method of removing accumulations of pigment upon the skin commonly called "moles." It is not advisable to attempt the management of these blemishes, except under the guidance of a physician, because any raised disfigurement upon the skin is very apt to become the seat of inflammation which may develop seriously unless it is being handled by an expert. These blemishes are never "beauty spots," contrary to popular fancy. A mole is a blemish which may at any time become irritated from one cause or another and begin to enlarge. The moment it does this is a warning for its speedy removal.

MRS. SMYTHE.—No, instead of advocating, I emphatically condemn any surgical procedure to restore sagging tissues. There is a method of tightening the skin, pursued by a complexion expert in one of our Eastern

cities, concerning which I will be glad to write you on personal application. Exercise of the facial muscles and tissues of the throat is the safest method. It is also very satisfactory when persisted in. These exercises were fully described and illustrated in my article in the April, 1916, number of this magazine. This number can still be supplied at thirty cents.

MAY Y.—Headache is not a disease. It is a symptom of many underlying conditions. In your case, I rather think it springs from a constipated state, a condition of auto-intoxication due to an injudicious diet. Cut out sweets and pastries, eat plenty of bran every day, use olive oil both plain and on your food, drink six glasses of water during the course of every twenty-four hours, and exercise freely in the open air.

Directions for making a fruit laxative will be mailed you on request.

MOVIE STAR.—All hair has a tendency to grow darker at the roots with advancing years. It is, of course, more noticeable with those possessed of light hair. I shall be glad to send you the formula for a wash that will not only remedy the condition, but bring out the coppery glints in your hair. It is a delightful lotion.

MRS. STONE.—"Lait-Virginal" is a complexion wash consisting of the following: Tincture of benzoin, half an ounce; tincture of vanilla, two drams; rose water, one and one-half pints. Add the water very slowly to the tincture, in order to insure a perfectly milky emulsion which will not precipitate. Apply to the skin after bathing. Toilet vinegar is sometimes preferable, where large pores exist, because it contracts these and so refines a coarse skin. An excellent formula is available on application.

WORKER.—An excellent nail cleanser and cream contains powdered Castile soap, one dram; petrolatum, one ounce; oil of bergamot, three drops. The repeated use of this cream will do much toward improving soiled and neglected nails. An article on the "Hands, Arms, and Nails" will appear later.

MOLLIE.—Under no circumstances be induced to use the powerful element you mention internally. You will do yourself incalculable harm. I will gladly put you in touch with the proper remedies to bleach your skin if you will write me personally, inclosing self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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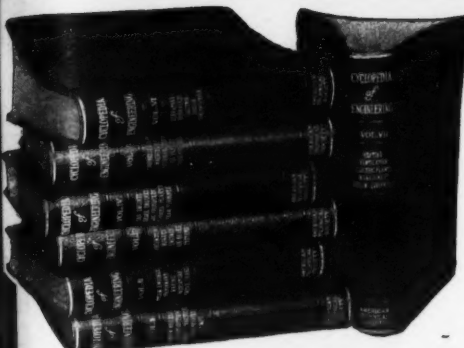
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Write a Song—Love, mother, childhood, patriotic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words today. Thomas Merlin, 240 Reaper Block, Chicago.

If you want to know what men buy

ask the proprietor of a hotel drug store. You know—the snappy little store with a back entrance opening into the hotel lobby. He gets practically all of the traveling man trade.

Now you may not know it, but when traveling men get to buying an article regularly, it's a certain sign that the general public will do likewise. Traveling men are the wisest and gamest buyers in the world. They are not afraid of a new idea and you can't come too strong for them on quality.

I make it a point therefore to check up, from time to time, the sale of Mennen's Shaving Cream to traveling men. In the last month, nine hotel drug store buyers have told me that they sell more of Mennen's than of all other shaving creams put together.

"I've noticed" said one buyer, "that a man who has used Mennen's always likes to talk about it. Mennen's has more real friends than any article in the store."

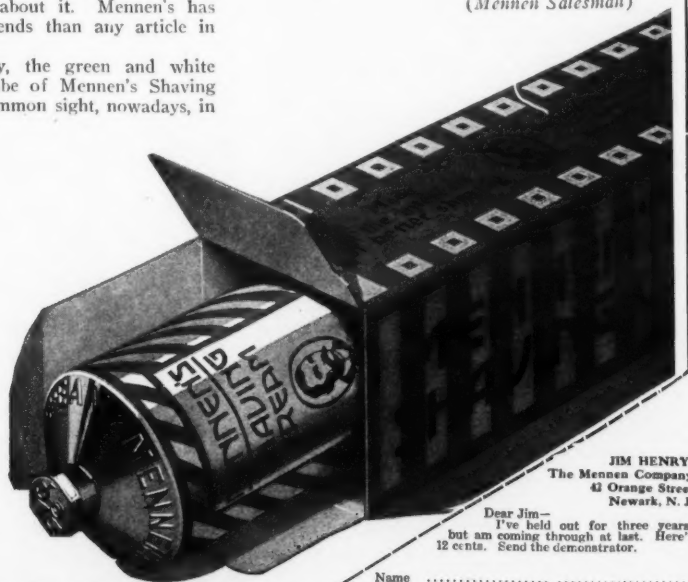
By the way, the green and white barber pole tube of Mennen's Shaving Cream is a common sight, nowadays, in



Pullman dressing rooms. If there was any way of deciding, I'd bet hard money that 75% of traveling men inject a little happiness into their lives each morning with a cold water lather of Mennen's. Mennen users don't mind Mr. Pullman's little joke of putting a hot water sign on one of his cold water faucets. A cold water lather of Mennen's will soften your beard wonderfully and stimulate the skin as well.

Send for a 12 cent demonstrator tube and prove it. Remember—three minutes work with the brush—no rubbing—and use a lot of water.

Jim Henry
(Mennen Salesman)



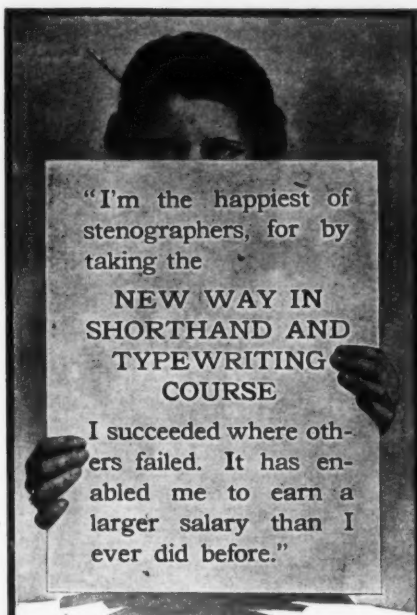
JIM HENRY,
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I've held out for three years,
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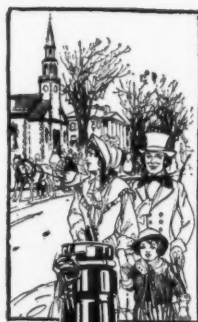
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It's bad enough to be held up and robbed of your money and your watch.

But, to allow waste matter to be "held up" in your intestines may be far more serious. You can get more money; you can buy another watch. You may never be able to get your health back.

Constipation is the "hold up" man of the human system. The food waste it holds up in your lower intestines decays and generates poisons. A poisoned system is the result.

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Nujol acts easily, harmlessly, naturally—makes you "regular as clockwork."

Warning: Nujol is sold only in sealed bottles bearing the Nujol Trade Mark. Insist on Nujol. At all drug stores in U. S. and Canada. You may suffer from substitutes.

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No Questions Asked
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Name.....

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The Secret of Being a Convincing Talker

How I Learned It in One Evening

By GEORGE RAYMOND

"HAVE you heard the news about Frank Jordan?" This question quickly brought me to the little group which had gathered in the center of the office. Jordan and I had started with the Great Eastern Machinery Co., within a month of each other, four years ago. A year ago Jordan was taken into the accounting division and I was sent out as salesman. Neither of us was blessed with an unusual amount of brilliancy, but we "got by" in our new jobs well enough to hold them.

Imagine my amazement, then, when I heard:

"Jordan's just been made Treasurer of the Company!"

I could hardly believe my ears. But there was the "Notice to Employees" on the bulletin board, telling about Jordan's good fortune.

Now I knew that Jordan was a capable fellow, quiet, and unassuming, but I never would have picked him for any such sudden rise. I knew, too, that the Treasurer of the Great Eastern had to be a big man, and I wondered how in the world Jordan landed the place.

The first chance I got, I walked into Jordan's new office and after congratulating him warmly, I asked him to let me "in" on the details of how he jumped ahead so quickly. His story is so intensely interesting that I am going to repeat it as closely as I remember.

"I'll tell you just how it happened, George, because you may pick up a pointer or two that will help you."

"You remember how scared I used to be whenever I had to talk to the chief? You remember how you used to tell me that every time I opened my mouth I put my foot into it, meaning of course that every time I spoke I got into trouble? You remember when Ralph Slinton left to take charge of the Western office and I was asked to present him with the loving cup the boys gave him, how flustered I was and how I couldn't say a word because there were people around? You remember how confused I used to be every time I met new people? I couldn't say what I wanted to say when I wanted to say it; and I determined that if there was any possible chance to learn how to talk I was going to do it."

"The first thing I did was to buy a number of books on public speaking, but they seemed to be meant for those who wanted to become orators, whereas what I wanted to learn was not only how to speak in public but how to speak to individuals under various conditions in business and social life."

"A few weeks later, just as I was about to give up hope of ever learning how to talk interestingly, I read an announcement stating that Dr. Frederick Hook Law of New York University had just completed a new course in business talking and public speaking entitled 'Mastery of Speech.'

The course was offered on approval without money in advance, so since I had nothing whatever to lose by examining the lessons, I sent for them and in a few days they arrived. I glanced through the entire eight lessons, reading the headings and a few paragraphs here and there, and in about an hour the whole secret of effective speaking was opened to me.

"For example, I learned why I had always lacked confidence, why talking had always seemed something to be dreaded, whereas it is really the simplest thing in the world to 'get up and talk.' I learned how to secure complete attention to what I was saying and how to make everything I said interesting, forceful and convincing. I learned the art of listening, the value of silence, and the power of brevity. Instead of being funny at the wrong time, I learned how and when to use humor with telling effect."

"But perhaps the most wonderful thing about the lessons were the actual examples of what things to say and when to say them to meet every condition. I found that there was a knack in making oral reports to my superiors. I found that there was a right way and a wrong way to present complaints, to give estimates, and to issue orders."

"I picked up some wonderful pointers about how to give my opinions, about how to answer questions, about how to ask the bank for a loan, about how to ask for extensions. Another thing that struck me forcibly was that instead of antagonizing people when I didn't agree with them, I learned how to bring them around to my way of thinking in the most pleasant sort of way. Then, of course, along with those lessons there were chapters on speaking before large audiences, how to find material for talking and speaking, how to talk to friends, how to talk to servants, and how to talk to children."

"Why, I got the secret the very first evening and it was only a short time before I was applying all of the principles and found that my words were beginning to have an almost magical effect upon everybody to whom I spoke. It seemed that I got things done instantly, where formerly, as you know, what I said went in one ear and out the other. I began to acquire an executive ability that surprised me. I smoothed out difficulties like a true diplomat. In my talks with the chief I spoke clearly, simply, convincingly. Then came my first promotion since I entered the accounting department. I was given the job of answering complaints, and I made good. From that I was given the job of making collections. When Mr. Buckley joined the Officers' Training Camp, I was made Treasurer. Between you and me, George, my salary is now \$7,500 a year, and I expect it will be more from the first of the year."

"And I want to tell you sincerely, that I attribute my success solely to the fact that I learned how to talk to people."

When Jordan finished, I asked him for the address of the publishers of Dr. Law's Course and he gave it to me. I sent for it and found it to be exactly as he had stated. After studying the simple lessons I began to tell people who had previously refused to listen to me at all. After four months of record-breaking sales during the dull season of the year, I received a wire from the company asking me to return to the office. We had quite a long talk, in which I explained how I was able to break sales records—and I was appointed Sales Manager at twice my former salary. I learned that there was nothing in my course that had changed except that I had acquired the ability to talk where formerly I simply used "words without reason." I can never thank Jordan enough for telling me about Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking. Jordan and I, both spending all our spare time making public speeches on war subjects, and Jordan is being talked about as Mayor of our little town.

So confident is the Independent Corporation, publishers of "Mastery of Speech," Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking that once you have an opportunity to see in your own home how you can, in one hour, learn the secret of speaking and how you can apply the principles of effective speech in all conditions, that they are willing to send you the Course on free examination.

Don't send any money. Just mail the coupon or write a letter and the complete Course will be sent, charges prepaid, at once. If you are not entirely satisfied send it back within five days after you receive it and you will owe nothing. On the other hand, if you are pleased as are the thousands of men and women who have used the Course, send only \$5 in full payment. You take no risk and you have nothing to gain, so mail the coupon now before this remarkable day is withdrawn.

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*A Diagram
Picture*



*Note the
Pointed Corn*

Why Corns Hurt

Note this diagram picture of a corn. Note its conical shape. The cause of the corn is pressure. And pressure makes it hurt. The point of the corn is pushed into the nerves.

Applying a Blue-jay plaster instantly removes the pressure. Note the felt pad (A) in the picture below. We apply no anesthetic. The pad gives barefoot comfort in the tightest shoe.

But that is temporary. One should not continue a pad. The corn should be quickly ended.

The bit of B&B wax in the center of the pad does that (as noted in illustration below). In two days, usually, the whole corn disappears. Only rare corns need a second application.

That's the great reason for Blue-jay. It stops the pain, then ends the corn. And it wraps the corn so the action is undisturbed.

Then the action of the B&B wax is centered on the corn. Held there by the rubber coated adhesive tape which wraps comfortably around the toe. Healthy tissue is not affected.

These facts cannot be true of liquid applications.

Those are the reasons why millions of people have adopted the Blue-jay method. It is scientific, quick, comfortable and certain.

Keeping corns is folly when this easy way can end them. Treating them in cruder ways is inexcusable.

For your own sake, convince yourself by applying Blue-jay to one corn.



B&B

Blue-jay

The Scientific Corn Ender

*Stops Pain Instantly
Ends Corns Completely*

25c at Druggists

BAUER & BLACK, Makers of Surgical Dressings, etc., Chicago, New York, Toronto

Growing up with COLGATE'S



A wise mother judges not only by height and weight, but by general health. And there the faithful care of the teeth plays a large part. That is why her children grow up with Colgate's—the safe, sane, *delicious* dentifrice. Do yours?

Regular tooth brushing is a treat, not a task, with Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream.



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